

## Byblos in the Late Bronze Age

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# Byblos in the Late Bronze Age

*Interactions between the Levantine  
and Egyptian Worlds*

*By*

Marwan Kilani



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*A Lucilla, a te mamma, perchè sei sempre stata al mio fianco,  
e lo sei anche ora che non ci sei più.*





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# Abbreviations

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>CAD</i>   | Ignace Jay Gelb et al., eds. (1956–2011), <i>The Assyrian Dictionary</i> , 29 vols., Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Press.                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>CIS</i>   | Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (1881–1962), <i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i> , Paris: E Reipublicae Typographeo.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>CK</i>    | Texts from a private collection. See Arnaud 1992, 192, n. 69.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>CTH</i>   | Emmanuel Laroche (1971), <i>Catalogue des textes hittites</i> , Etudes et commentaires 75, Paris: Klincksieck.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>EA</i>    | Amarna letter; tablet number in J. A. Knudtzon et al. (1915), <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln: mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen</i> , Leipzig: Hinrichs.                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>HTBM</i>  | T. G. H. James (1961), <i>Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, Etc</i> , 2nd edition, London: Trustees of the British Museum.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>KBo</i>   | Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (1916–), <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i> , Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, Leipzig: Hinrichs.                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Keret</i> | Epic of Keret, see H. L. Ginsberg (1946), <i>The Legend of King Keret: a Canaanite Epic of the Bronze Age</i> , in collab. with American Schools of Oriental Research, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Supplemental Studies 2–3, New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research. |
| <i>KRI</i>   | K. A. Kitchen (1975–1990), <i>Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical</i> , Oxford: Blackwell.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>KTU</i>   | Manfried Dietrich et al. (2013), <i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten = The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places</i> , 3rd edition, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 360/1, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.                                |
| <i>KUB</i>   | Vorderasiatische Abteilung (1921–1990), <i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi</i> , Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>LÄ</i>    | Wolfgang Helck et al., eds. (1972–1992), <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , 7 vols., Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>PM</i>    | Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss (1960), <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings</i> , 2nd edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press.                                                                                                                    |
| <i>PRU</i>   | Charles Vroilleaud et al. (1955–), <i>Le palais royal d'Ugarit</i> , Mission archéologique de Ras Shamra 6–7, 9, 11–12, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>RIH</i>   | Ras ibn Hani – Museum siglum of the Louvre and Damascus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>RS</i>    | Ras Shamra – Museum siglum of the Louvre and Damascus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- RSOu 7 Pierre Bordreuil (1991), *Une bibliothèque ausuddela ville: les textes de la 34e campagne* (1973), Ras Shamra-Ougarit 7, Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations.
- Urk. IV Kurt Sethe and Wolfgang Helck (1906–1958), *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums IV*, Leipzig: Hinrichs.
- UT Cyrus H. Gordon (1965), *Ugaritic Textbook: Grammar, Texts in Transliteration, Cuneiform Selections, Glossary, Indices*, *Analecta orientalia* 38, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.
- WB Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow (1926–1963), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols., Leipzig: Hinrichs.
- Wen. Tale of Wenamun – Bernd U. Schipper (2005), “Die Erzählung des Wenamun: ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion”, Doctoral Thesis, Hamburg: Universität Hamburg.



# Introduction

## 1 Aims of the Book

Byblos, modern Jubayl, is a Lebanese city of about 40,000 inhabitants some 42 kilometres north of Beirut. During the Bronze Age, Byblos was a “contact zone” linking Egypt, the Near East, and the Aegean world. Through its harbour, Egyptian kings had access to the products of Lebanon and Syria, while Byblos and its rulers had access to the goods, customs, and knowledge of Egypt. Moreover, at least in some periods, the city was a strong base for Egyptian military incursions in the surrounding regions.

Byblos has a long and rich archaeological tradition: many excavations have been conducted, and the whole city has been almost fully explored archaeologically. It is also prominent in well-known historical sources and literary compositions of different periods and origin: besides the numerous attestations in Egyptian documents, it appears in texts from the archives of Ugarit and in Graeco-Roman works such as the *Phoenician History* by Philo, a Greek writer born in Byblos itself.

In spite of this prominence, however, the city has attracted relatively little attention in modern scholarship. The results of the excavations have been published mainly in the form of a catalogue of objects and in preliminary reports,<sup>1</sup> and as Elayi pointed out (2009, 10–11), the city has been the object of only very general publications (e.g., Dunand 1963; Wein and Opificius 1963; Jidejian 1968) or of studies focusing on specific phases or selected features of its culture (e.g., Saghieh 1983; Margueron 1994; Mazza 1994; Homsy 2003; Nigro 2014). As a result, some periods of the history of Byblos have never been studied systematically. The Late Bronze Age is one of them, although even a straightforward survey of the evidence shows its importance in the historical evolution of the city and its interactions.

In particular, a range of evidence suggests that Byblos was a prosperous and powerful city during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages/Old and Middle Kingdoms. Both the Egyptian sources from these periods and the abundant archaeological material from the city attest to its integration in the Near Eastern commercial network. The same evidence demonstrates its strong cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> Only the prehistoric material, and in part the architectural remains of the Early Bronze Age, were the object of detailed investigation in the primary publication (see §2.1.2–2.1.4).



and economic links with Egypt, and suggests that at least at times its political influence may have extended north as far as Ullassa and Irqata (Allen 2008; Thalmann 2008). Moreover, since the Early Bronze Age/Old Kingdom Byblos had had a special religious significance for the Egyptians: its region was considered a “God’s Land” (Cooper 2011), and its local goddess and her temple had an important role in the interactions with Egypt (Diego Espinel 2002). In Egyptian texts she was usually referred to as *nbt kbn*, “Lady of Byblos”, probably a translation of a local epithet, because in later Phoenician sources she is referred to as *b’t gbl*, which also means “Lady of Byblos.” The goddess is attested in Egyptian texts since the Early Bronze Age/Old Kingdom, where she appears as a form of Hathor (Hollis 2009). Starting from the first millennium BCE, she was also associated with Isis, while according to Plutarch the city of Byblos played a role in some episodes of the Osirian cycle. As attested by Lucian (*De Dea Syria* 7–9), the religious connection between Egypt and Byblos lasted until Roman times (Griffiths 1980, 28–34; Lightfoot 2003, 250–53).

By contrast, the geopolitical situation of the city after the Late Bronze Age appears to have been very different. We do not know much about Byblos in the Early Iron Age (Dunand 1963, 30–31; Mazza 1994, 125–26; Homsy 2003, 246; Elayi 2009, 13, 51 and *passim*), but what we see from the eighth century BCE onwards is a small and peripheral town, without a fleet and closed in on itself (Elayi 1985; Stieglitz 1990, 11; Bondi 1994, 137, 139; Mazza 1994, 134; Elayi 2009, 10–11). Byblos did not participate in the Phoenician colonial expansion,<sup>2</sup> and territories and cities that had been under its control during the Late Bronze Age were said, during the Iron Age, to be connected with Tyre or Sidon.<sup>3</sup> While the city seems to have maintained some religious authority until the Roman times (Ribichini 1994), its earlier political and economic power had faded away. It is thus reasonable to think that such Iron Age “eclipse” of the city, using Elayi’s words (Elayi 2009, 11), could have had at least some of its roots in the Late Bronze Age.

The aim of this book is to address the role and history of Byblos during the Late Bronze Age, first by presenting and assessing the available primary sources, and then by using them to explore, contextualise, and characterise the role of the city, its interactions, and its evolution within the contemporary Levantine geopolitical landscape.

2 Except perhaps with a colony on the Aegean island of Melos, at least according to a passage of Stephanus of Byzantium (*Peri poleōn, Mēlos*); Bondi 1994, in particular 140.

3 A good example is the city of Batruna, which probably belonged to the kingdom of Byblos in the Amarna period (see below §5.4.5), but in Graeco-Roman times was said to be a colony of Tyre founded in the ninth century BCE by king Ethoba’al (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.13:2; Bondi 1994, 139).

## 2 Structure of the Book

This book is divided into two parts. In the first, the primary sources are presented. The relevant archaeological evidence is discussed, focusing mainly on those items and architectural structures that can be informative of the dynamics shaping the evolution of the city and its international interactions. Egyptian written sources, Amarna Letters, documents from Ugarit, and one Hittite text are then assessed. The second part of the book consists of syntheses and discussions based on such evidence.

The archaeological evidence comes first because it yields information about the structures of the city and the dynamics characterizing its history, while the written sources focus more on specific events and well-defined interactions. The former provides background, while the latter highlight aspects of the socio-political history of the city. The first section is introduced by a summary of the history of the excavations, followed by quantitative and distribution analyses of selected categories of objects. Egyptian items and architectural fragments found out of context are then discussed. Relevant buildings and archaeological areas are presented afterwards.

Written sources have an important role in this book, both because they are inherently more precise and because of the limitations affecting the archaeological material. Although both Egyptian and Near Eastern written sources mention Byblos, the Egyptian material is particularly important, not only because of the number of attestations, but also because of the strong economic, ideological, and cultural links connecting the city with Egypt.

In order to properly interpret such written sources, their contexts as well as their underlying narratives, genres, audiences, and purposes in the societies that produced them have to be taken into consideration. These aspects are thus discussed whenever they appear to be relevant to assessing the information that the sources provide.

The written sources are arranged according to five chronological phases, following a division that emerges more or less naturally from them. In particular, there are three short, relatively well-defined periods with a substantial number of attestations: the period corresponding to the reign of Thutmose III (§5.2), the Amarna period (§5.4), and the time of Ramses II (§5.6). These periods alternate with two others that have produced few or no mentions: the period from Amenhotep II to the Amarna period (§5.3), for which only two mentions are attested, and the period from the end of the Amarna Age to the beginning of the reign of Ramses II (§5.5), for which no attestation of the city is known. Although this frame is dictated more by accidents of preservation than by a periodisation based on historical considerations, it does nonetheless produce a

practical and reasonable organization of the sources. This division is based on the Egyptian chronology because the majority of the texts come from Egypt, but sources from other regions fit quite well within it. Each of these groups of sources is discussed in a specific section. Because individual texts mentioning Byblos vary in character and have been unevenly studied, the way they are presented and dealt with may differ from one chapter to another.

Although in this book absolute dates play a marginal, secondary role, it can be useful to provide here a temporal setting for these periods. In this respect, three options are available. The first two are the absolute chronologies of Shaw (2000, 484–85) and Hornung (2006, 492–93), which are commonly used in Egyptology. The third option, instead, is the radiocarbon-based chronology suggested by the Shortland and Bronk Ramsey (2013, Appendix, Table 5). The latter was obtained through an integrated approach that used Bayesian models to combine fresh radiocarbon-based dates with historical data such as reign lengths. The results are short ranges of dates, instead of specific years, that have a probability of being correct of at least 95%. As for the New Kingdom, the model they call NKM1 performs particularly well, and although it is compatible with both Shaw's and Hornung's chronologies, it slightly favours the first. According to these three chronologies, the reigns of the Pharaohs relevant for the periods defining the structure of this book can be dated as in table 1.1. As appears, they are all very close and, overall, in agreement.

The data yielded by the archaeological material and by the written sources are discussed in a wider perspective in the final part of the book. There the evidence treated in the first part is combined in order to sketch a picture of Byblos, of its socio-economic and geopolitical structures, and of its historical evolution during the Late Bronze Age. A general conclusion follows, summing up the results of the research.

TABLE 1.1 Absolute chronology for the reigns of the main Pharaohs discussed in this book

|              | Shaw | Hornung | Sh. and B. R. NKM1 95%<br>between: |
|--------------|------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Thutmose III | 1479 | 1479    | 1499~1472                          |
|              | 1425 | 1425    | 1446~1421                          |
| Hatshepsut   | 1473 | 1479    | 1491~1467                          |
|              | 1458 | 1458    | 1478~1452                          |
| Amenhotep II | 1427 | 1425    | 1446~1421                          |
|              | 1400 | 1400    | 1419~1394                          |

TABLE 1.1 Absolute chronology for the reigns of the main Pharaohs (*cont.*)

|               | Shaw | Hornung | Sh. and B. R. NKM1 95%<br>between: |
|---------------|------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Amenhotep III | 1390 | 1390    | 1409~1384                          |
|               | 1352 | 1353    | 1371~1346                          |
| Akhenaton     | 1352 | 1353    | 1371~1346                          |
|               | 1336 | 1336    | 1357~1332                          |
| Tutankhamun   | 1336 | ?       | 1355~1330                          |
|               | 1327 | 1324    | 1346~1321                          |
| Horemheb      | 1323 | 1319    | 1343~1317                          |
|               | 1295 | 1292    | 1315~1288                          |
| Seti I        | 1294 | 1290    | 1314~1287                          |
|               | 1279 | 1279    | 1299~1272                          |
| Ramses II     | 1279 | 1279    | 1299~1272                          |
|               | 1213 | 1213    | 1233~1206                          |

## Sources – Archaeological Evidence

### 1 Archaeological Sources – Overview

#### 1.1 *Excavation History*

The site of the ancient city of Byblos is now an archaeological park located on a small hill near the sea, at the very heart of Jubayl, a modern and thriving city. The development of the modern city is fairly recent, going back just a few decades. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first systematic excavations took place, Byblos was a small town built around its medieval harbour and surrounded by a countryside marked by sparsely scattered houses and dominated by the imposing bulk of a crusader castle. The remains of the ancient city were located at the south of the castle, on a small hill in an area with just a few isolated houses. The crusader castle was the only significant building on the hill, and it was located on its side thus covering just a marginal area of the ancient city (fig. 2.1).

This ideal situation attracted the attention of scholars and archaeologists since the late nineteenth century, as it allowed extensive and long-lasting excavations with little demolition work and without conflicting with the daily life of the local population. The first to notice and record the archaeological potential of Byblos was the French philologist and historian Renan, who visited Lebanon in 1860, when the entire region still was part of the Ottoman Empire. In his exploration of the city, he limited himself to a general surface survey and to a series of explorative trenches, but that was enough to recognise the importance of the site and its close relations with Egypt (Renan 1864, 214). After the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon became part of the French mandate, and its archaeological heritage passed to the supervision of the French authorities.

At this time Montet managed to persuade the French government of the historical importance of the city (Montet 1928–1929, 10). When he arrived there, a few houses, some orchards, and an abandoned cemetery occupied the site. After apparently difficult discussions and negotiations, he obtained the permission to excavate near the medieval castle, on the land of a man called Sheik Hossain El-Housamy and of another who is just referred as “the Hadji” (Montet 1928–1929, 15). Montet was lucky: in his first campaigns (1921–1922) he found the remains of some religious buildings, including what was later identified as the Temple of the Lady of Byblos. And this was just the beginning: in 1922





FIGURE 2.1 Aerial view of the area of Byblos at the beginning of the twentieth century, possibly around 1920. At the centre of the picture one can see the tell with the remains of the ancient city. On the northern side of the tell (left in the picture) one can see the medieval castle, located just above the town of Byblos itself, with its medieval harbour (also on the left). Scattered houses marked the countryside  
FROM DUNAND 1939, PL. I

a landslide revealed a cave that appeared to be the grave of a Bronze Age king (Montet 1928–1929, 17). In the following years Montet discovered eight other royal tombs. Five of them<sup>1</sup> had been partially or completely looted.<sup>2</sup> Three of them,<sup>3</sup> however, were intact and yielded a number of goods that demonstrated the wealth and power of their owners and the pervasiveness of Egyptian cultural influence on the ruling class of the city.

After the extraordinary discoveries of Montet, a new round of archaeological excavations was organised. These new campaigns started in 1926, 14 months after Montet's last campaign in 1924 (Dunand 1939, 1), and were led by Dunand who, in contrast with his predecessors, planned from the beginning a complete and comprehensive exploration of the city. His aim was to excavate the whole

1 I.e., tombs IV, V, VI, VII, VIII – Montet 1928–1929, 143–242.

2 One, tomb IV, as recently as 1851 – Montet 1928–1929, 21.

3 I.e., tombs I, II, III – Montet 1928–1929, 143–242.

area down to the bare rock, and this is what he did over the following forty years.

The constant flow of new discoveries allowed Dunand to regularly obtain the funding needed for the campaigns. The excavations had only one short interruption in 1939 because of the beginning of the Second World War, and they were definitely closed only in 1975, at the beginning of the Lebanese civil war. At this time Dunand's work was essentially almost complete: during his years of activity he managed to uncover the whole area within the walls of the city, and part of the late (Persian and later) quarters outside them. Only some late and peripheral sectors still needed to be explored.

Besides these main excavations, a few smaller projects have taken place also outside the main urban areas. The excavation of Necropolis K in 1972–1973 under the supervision of Gimon (Salles 1980, 7) is the most important example. Projects such as the exploratory trench of Saghieh-Beydoun (2009) and Frost's study of some structures visible near the sea (2001) are also notable. Furthermore, some geoarchaeological studies have been undertaken to try to locate the ancient harbours and to better define the ancient coastline in general (Frost 1998–1999, 251–53; Morhange 1998–1999; Frost and Morhange 2000; Collina-Girard et al. 2002; Stefaniuk et al. 2005; Marriner et al. 2008; Carayon et al. 2011; Grimal and Francis-Allouche 2012a, 301–2; 2012b).

### 1.2 *Publication History – Renan and Montet*

All these archaeological activities have been documented, but the quality of the records is not uniform and the majority of them are problematic in various ways. Renan's observations and discoveries were presented in his *Mission de Phénicie* (1864, 153–358), where he gave a general description of what he saw and of the objects he collected during his surface survey in the city. His description, however, was not systematic and offered little, if any, information about the context of the objects he discovered. Renan's book is thus an important witness of the early history of archaeology in Lebanon, but it has no substantive value for the archaeological study of Byblos.

Montet collected the results of his four campaigns in a single volume published in 1928. Its quality is uneven: although the description of the tombs is quite detailed and accurate, the accounts of the excavations in the city present several issues. The main problem is the absence of any precise methodology: as was common at the time, Montet was more concerned about the objects and structures he was finding, rather than about their precise locations, contexts, and relationships. As a result, the publication is essentially a catalogue of objects grouped by type and organised according to the general building in which they were found. A series of general plans and pictures accompanies

this catalogue, but usually no information about the exact location of the various finds is provided. Obviously nothing is said about the stratigraphy and the stratigraphic relations characterizing the site. Montet's preliminary analyses and interpretations of the architectural remains can occasionally give some information about the context of some objects, such as, for instance, those found under the floors of the temples in foundation deposits, but they often remain too vague to be useful. The utility of Montet's reports is thus relatively limited. Fortunately, the area he excavated was quite restricted, and his discoveries were limited. The lack of precise data for his excavations, therefore, does not constitute a major issue for the study of the site.

### 1.3 *Publication History – Dunand*

The area excavated by Dunand was much more important, and therefore much more attention has to be paid to his publications. Over the years, Dunand documented his work in Byblos in various forms, each with its own issues and limitations. Initially, during the excavations themselves, Dunand published regular reports<sup>4</sup> describing his progress and the main discoveries of the season. These reports allow us to follow the general evolution of the excavations. However, given their brevity, vagueness, and lack of precise information, they are of little use for a detailed study of the city. Since the beginning of his work, however, Dunand organised his excavations around the idea of collecting all the results in a monumental publication presenting a detailed and comprehensive study of the city and its society throughout all of its historical phases. The first and most crucial problem with this approach is that Dunand died before being able to complete it. His original plan seems to have consisted of three volumes that would have given a general, “raw” presentation of the objects and of the architectural structures discovered during the various campaigns and at least five or six other volumes treating specific aspects of the site and of the history of the city.<sup>5</sup>

Of these, Volumes I and II, which present material uncovered during 1926–1932 and 1933–1938 respectively, were published in 1939 and 1954. Volume III, which was meant to present the material and topographical data

<sup>4</sup> Published in *Syria* and in the *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth*.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. IV on the prehistoric stone tools from Byblos and the Lebanese coast, Vol. V on the architecture, tombs, and domestic material culture from the Neolithic to the beginning of the urban phase, Vol. VI on the urbanism and architecture from the proto-urban phase to the Amorite occupation at the end of the Early Bronze Age, Vol. VII on the temples, from their Neolithic origins to the Roman period, and Vol. VIII on the material that should have been published in Vol. III (See Dunand and Cauvin 1968; Dunand 1973; Dunand and Lauffray 2008). Dunand also mentioned a possible volume on the pottery (Salles 1980, 5, see also Seif and Noujaim-Clark 2007, 84).



of the campaigns after 1938, has never been published (Dunand and Lauffray 2008, 1), and the documents and excavation notes on which it should have been based were probably lost during the Lebanese civil war (Dunand and Lauffray 2008, 9). Volumes IV and V were published in 1968 and 1973 (Dunand and Cauvin 1968; Dunand 1973), and focus on the prehistoric and pre-urban phases of the city, providing a detailed analysis of various aspects of the site in these periods, including the lithics, pottery, funerary practices and architecture. The posthumous Volume VI (Dunand and Lauffray 2008) was made possible through the efforts of Jean Lauffray (who was one of the architects who participated in Dunand's campaigns) and Yasmine Makaroun-Bou Assaf, who collected, edited and completed the notes left by Dunand. This volume analyses the architectural remains of the early urban phases up to the Amorite occupation, at the end of the Early Bronze Age. The synthesis volumes planned by Dunand for the following phases and periods have never been published.

This is a sparse record, especially considering the long and complex history of Byblos. For the New Kingdom/Late Bronze Age phases of the city, on which my research focuses, the only sources available are the "raw" accounts of Volumes I and II. These do contain a considerable amount of data. However, they were conceived only as preliminary presentations of the material and architectural discoveries as they appeared in the course of the excavation. Some brief syntheses and interpretations are present, but they are nothing more than preliminary observations.

In addition, both volumes have a number of problems that are rooted in Dunand's peculiar excavation method. Since his very first campaign in Byblos, Dunand applied a very specific and innovative method. Having observed the complexity of the archaeological remains (Dunand 1939, 6), he realised that conventional (for the time) approaches would not be appropriate to properly document the site. As a result, he developed a new technique consisting in digging the whole site in "levée," namely artificial horizontal parallel layers of 20cm thick, according to a regular horizontal grid covering the whole surface of the excavation. Walls and architectural remains were recorded for each section of the grid at the beginning of each of these artificial layers, while the position of every single object was recorded in absolute terms, through a system of three coordinates x, y, and z, originating from a fixed topographical station.

According to Dunand, the idea was to imitate the procedures adopted in biology to study complex structures. He took the example of an onion: "Cette méthode revient à découper les installations successives par le procédé des plaques minces, d'usage habituel dans les études de sciences naturelles. Ce procédé sectionne par exemple un oignon en autant de lamelles possibles, toutes rigoureusement parallèles. Ces lamelles permettront l'étude de chaque particularité intime de cette racine bulbeuse, et aussi sa reconstitution

graphique absolument complète. Ce procédé s'oppose à celui qui l'étudierait par enlèvement de ses feuillets successifs de croissance. Les deux systèmes ont leurs avantages et leurs inconvénients. Par son application systématique, celui des couches minces m'a permis le relevé complet, pierre par pierre, de toutes les constructions, de tous les murs, de tous les chicots de maçonnerie; de les localiser dans un carroyage régulier où tous les objets trouvés ont pu prendre place, sans préjuger leur intérêt. Ainsi notre inventaire est total, chaque silex comme la moindre perle, au même titre que les documents plus importants sont localisés dans l'espace par trois dimensions" (Dunand 1954, 3–4).

Dunand hoped to be able to achieve something similar with his excavations: literally to "dissect" the whole city, documenting the exact position of every object and structure, and then synthesising these data at the end of the excavations. Ideally, the main advantage of such a method was the possibility of documenting the totality of the archaeological remains in a very precise and purely objective way, without introducing any interpretative filter during the excavations themselves (see Dunand 1954, 4).

Dunand's method has often been criticised or misunderstood (or even criticised because it was misunderstood), both at the time (Dunand 1954, 3) and more recently (e.g., Margueron 1994, 15). However, it also had some defenders (Lauffray 1995; Leriche 1995, 440–41), and I agree that such an approach could have had some merits, at least in theory. Dunand's method was definitely innovative compared with the archaeological techniques of most of his peers working in the Near East in the 1920s, and the fact that similar approaches are used today in various scientific fields to explore complex structures is a confirmation of the validity of the theoretical concept on which it is based.<sup>6</sup>

In practice, however, this approach presents a series of problems. First, such an approach does not take into consideration, at the moment of the excavation, the natural stratigraphic layers forming the site. This means that objects from different periods can lie side by side in the same artificial levée, because the levée itself crosses various natural stratigraphic layers. In addition, and more important, layers located in the middle of the 20 cm artificial levée are likely to be simply ignored and lost during the excavations. Obviously, stratigraphic data could have been integrated into Dunand's method. It would have been enough to record them for every levée together with the objects and the architectural remains. There are some clues suggesting that Dunand was aware of the problem and that he did take note of at least some stratigraphic features.<sup>7</sup>

6 Essentially, Dunand's method is nothing but a form of tomography.

7 E.g., the various mentions of layers of ash in the first two volumes (Dunand 1939; Dunand 1954), or the stratigraphic indications appearing here and there in the plans of the more recently published Volume VI (Dunand and Lauffray 2008).

These stratigraphic data, however, have not been published, and therefore not only is it impossible to use them, but it is not even possible to evaluate their accuracy and quality. In any case, it is unlikely that they were particularly precise as Dunand was a man of his time, and in his time various basic stratigraphic concepts had yet to be fully formulated.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in the introduction to his first volume, Dunand (1939, 6) stated that he considered the natural stratigraphy of Byblos too complex to be followed and systematically recorded, and he argued that the architectural remains would have provided the “skeleton” on which the spatial and chronological study of the city and its cultural phases had to be built.

Another fundamental problem, probably the main one, resides in recording, storing, elaborating, and finally interpreting and publishing the vast amount of data that an excavation like this generates. With today’s technologies, data collection and organization has been simplified in many ways, and can be achieved more easily, usually with the help of digital tools. In Dunand’s time, however, everything had to be done by hand, not only the recording of every wall and object, but also all the post-processing that, due to the peculiarities of Dunand’s method, constituted a major part of the work itself.<sup>9</sup> This constitutes a gigantic and extremely time-consuming project, especially if one plans to apply this method to a whole city. This explains why Dunand managed to study and publish only a small fraction of the information he collected in the decades of excavations.

Time was not the only problem. The quantity of the data itself was an important issue. In order to fulfil and properly exploit the potential of Dunand’s method, all the data would need to be made available. At the time this was simply impossible,<sup>10</sup> and therefore some selection and some compromises had to be made. This is what Dunand tried to do in his first two volumes. The results, however, are problematic. Both catalogue-style volumes incorporate figures and plates with pictures of the excavations and of the objects themselves, a series of plans, and a few short summaries and syntheses briefly presenting specific buildings or describing some phases of the excavations. Although the volumes share the same basic structure, the presentation of the data differs significantly. In the first, the various objects are numbered and listed first according to the levée and then according to the rectangle of the excavation grid

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8 See Leriche 1995, 443–44.

9 Nacousi (1985, 8) is probably the first who somehow foresaw digital technologies – without using them – to elaborate the archaeological records of Byblos.

10 Today publishing them in a database would be a good solution, but this option was obviously not available for Dunand.

in which they were found. No precise coordinate is given.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the grid used by Dunand during the first years was far from ideal, since it constituted of sectors that were not only excessively large, but also quite irregular and oriented in different directions (fig. 2.2).

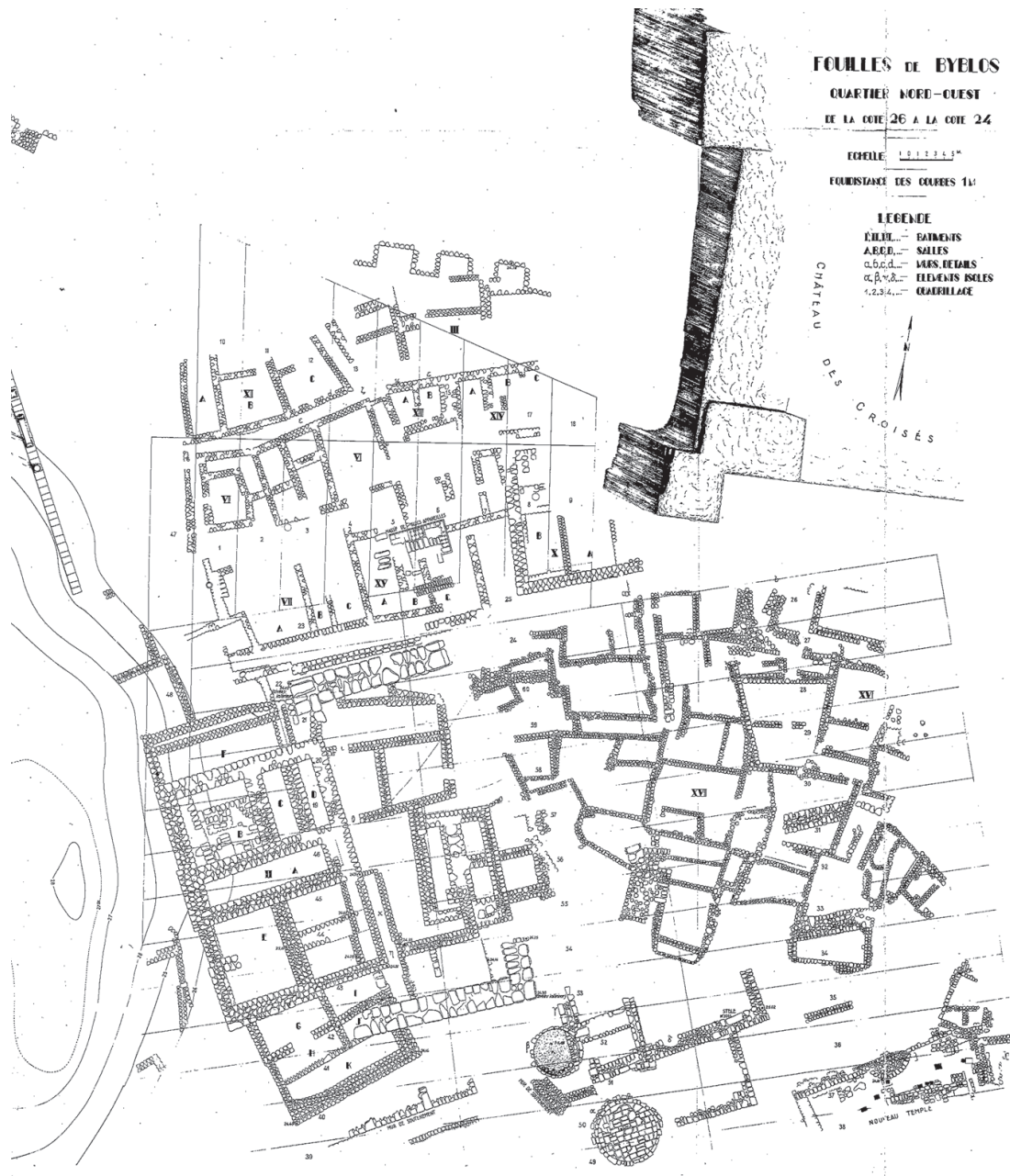


FIGURE 2.2 Grid used by Dunand to locate the objects published in Volume I  
FROM DUNAND 1939, PL. CCVII

11 Although they must have existed, as such precise records are at the basis of the method itself. It is in fact difficult to understand why Dunand did not publish the exact coordinates of the objects: is it due to some problem in the elaboration of the data? Or to some issue in the publication process? Whatever the reason was, it certainly was a poor choice that complicates and hampers the assessment of these data.



Although in some cases Dunand provides some information about where in the sector a specific object was found, these details are rare and not systematic. Moreover, they are usually too vague to allow the precise findspots to be determined.<sup>12</sup>

The plans in the first volume are also problematic. During the excavations, Dunand took note of all the architectural features discovered, drawing detailed plans indicating which structures emerged or disappeared in each levée. In his first volume, however, he selected and published plans for only four of the forty-two levées that he had excavated. These plans do not directly follow on from or relate to one another. Instead, they represent levées 2 m apart from one another. This means that the whole evolution of the architectural remains cannot be reconstructed in detail, and it is therefore impossible to identify and reconstruct the different phases of the various buildings. This problem also affects the study of the objects: without a precise architectural frame, the archaeological context and thus the relationships between the various objects cannot be reconstructed. The objects cannot be precisely located on the horizontal plan of the levées, nor can they be placed in relation to any architectural sequence. The value of the data is thus greatly reduced and the volume can be used only as an object catalogue and little more.

The situation in the second volume is different. Objects were still numbered and listed according to the levée and sector of the excavation grid in which they were found, but the grid itself was improved, and comprised a series of regular 10 × 10 m squares covering the excavated area. Every square is defined by two numbers, one indicating its row and one its column within the grid. Objects are listed according to three numbers: the number of the levée, and the two numbers defining the square in which they were found. Dunand did not publish the absolute coordinates for all the objects, but he did indicate the exact position of several of them in the plans. The higher resolution and precision of the excavation grid helps with the others. These do not completely compensate for the lack of precise coordinates, but they do reduce its negative impact. Another fundamental improvement is the inclusion of plans for each levée. The way this is done, however, is not straightforward. Instead of publishing one plan for each levée, Dunand published only five general plans, each recording the architectural remains discovered in five levées. A colour code is used to distinguish them, and to indicate where, for each levée, a given wall appears and where it disappears. This system is not easy to decode, but it is precise, complete and well-explained, and with patience it can be successfully managed and interpreted (fig. 2.3).

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<sup>12</sup> They usually consist in indications like “premier îlot” or “trouvée à l’ouest du rectangle 36.”



Although Dunand's publications are incomplete and present numerous challenges for analysis and interpretation, they still provide a considerable amount of information that, properly treated, can be useful in the study of Byblos during the Late Bronze Age. The solutions that I have developed to deal with these data, and the results that I have obtained from them, are presented in §2.3, §3 and §4 below.

#### 1.4 *Publication History – Later Works*

Dunand's work was followed by a number of other studies that sought to assess various aspects of the city. Saghie's (PhD thesis completed in 1975, published in 1983) analysis of the Early Bronze Age architectural remains uses data from Dunand's Volumes I and II to reconstruct the stratigraphy and to study the development of the city during the third millennium BCE. Although she does not investigate the Late Bronze Age levels, her work offers a series of methodological tools and frameworks to deal with Dunand's data. In particular, she used Dunand's plans to reconstruct the various phases of specific buildings and to infer their relative succession and thus approximate their vertical stratigraphy. She then "populated" these reconstructed vertical stratigraphies with the objects catalogued by Dunand, thus obtaining cultural ensembles and chronological sequences. It is clear that the precision, the "resolution," of these stratigraphies depends directly on, and is therefore limited by, the precision of Dunand's data. Saghie's results and their comparison with other sites, however, confirm the validity of her method.<sup>14</sup>

Two other important contributions which sought to elaborate Dunand's data are Finkbeiner's (1981) reconstruction of the architectural phases and architectural stratigraphy of the Obelisk Temple and Nacouzi's (1985) unpublished master's thesis on the urbanism of Byblos during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Both are based on Saghie's approach, and both help fill the gaps of Dunand's incomplete publications. Finally, a detailed monograph has been published by Salles (1980) on the excavations of Necropolis K, and a few additional studies have been dedicated to specific aspects of the site and the excavated material, or to other small archaeological investigations and surveys that have taken place outside the main area explored by Dunand.<sup>15</sup>

14 See for instance Thalmann 2008, who compared Saghie-Beydoun's results with data obtained from the excavations at Tell Arqa.

15 Especially Boschloos 2011–2012; Frost 1998–1999; Williams 1975, (especially Appendix D); Margueron 1994; Frost 2001; Collina-Girard et al. 2002; Homsey 2003; Saghie-Beydoun 2009.

## 2 The City – Buildings and Organization

The ancient city is located on a rocky promontory of about six hectares that rises on the coast between two bays. The promontory is divided into two hills, a higher one at the northwest (28,30 m), located closer to the sea, and a lower one (24,30 m), some 160 m away at the south-east. A small depression divides the two hills (18,40 m; Dunand 1939, 11–14; Nacousi 1985, 2; Margueron 1994, 14). The ancient city lies on and between these two hills. It was centred around a source of water, located in the depression, that was in use until the twentieth century, when it was known by the suggestive name of ‘Ayin El-Malek, the “Spring of the King” (Dunand 1960, 1960, 39; Fig. 4, A).

All this area was excavated by Montet and Dunand, but as explained in §2.1.2 and §2.1.3, their excavation techniques and the less than ideal publication make it difficult to analyse the urban structure and to follow it throughout the different periods. In addition, the preservation of the strata and architectural structures was not uniform. They were better preserved in the depression and in the eastern part of the site, while on the higher hill the archaeological layers predating the Graeco-Roman period have disappeared. Despite all these obstacles, the main features of the city are recognisable.

Imposing ramparts encircled the city. They survive, in part, in the northern and western sectors of the site (fig. 2.4, B). These defensive walls were erected during the Early Bronze Age and remained in use, with successive improvements and extensions, until the Persian period (Nacousi 1985, 12). Dunand recognised at least four phases in the city’s fortifications. He dated the construction of three of them, characterised by the presence of a glacis, to the second millennium BCE. He attributed the last of these three to the Late Bronze Age, between 1580 and 1200 BCE (Dunand 1954, pl. ccxii; Nacousi 1985, 13). Dunand, however, did not provide any evidence to support these dates; therefore, his interpretation must be taken with caution. Although it is clear that the city was fortified during the Late Bronze Age, the lack of reliable data prevents a more precise and independently verifiable identification.<sup>16</sup> No traces of walls have been found in the western part of the site, near the sea, but it is unlikely that this side of the city was unfortified, as the low cliff could hardly have been seen as a sufficient natural protection. Rather, the traces of the fortifications there must have disappeared due to the natural erosion that affects the cliff.<sup>17</sup>

16 Not everyone accepts Dunand’s position. For instance, Nacousi (1985, 15) seems to think, on the basis of comparisons with Jericho, that at least some elements of the glacis are older and should be dated to the Early Bronze Age. The passage in which she suggests this possibility is not, however, very clear, and her view must be taken with caution.

17 A possibility considered for instance by Margueron (1994, 19–20). Erosion was active until recently. Indeed, it was a landslide on the cliff near the sea after some weeks of rains in



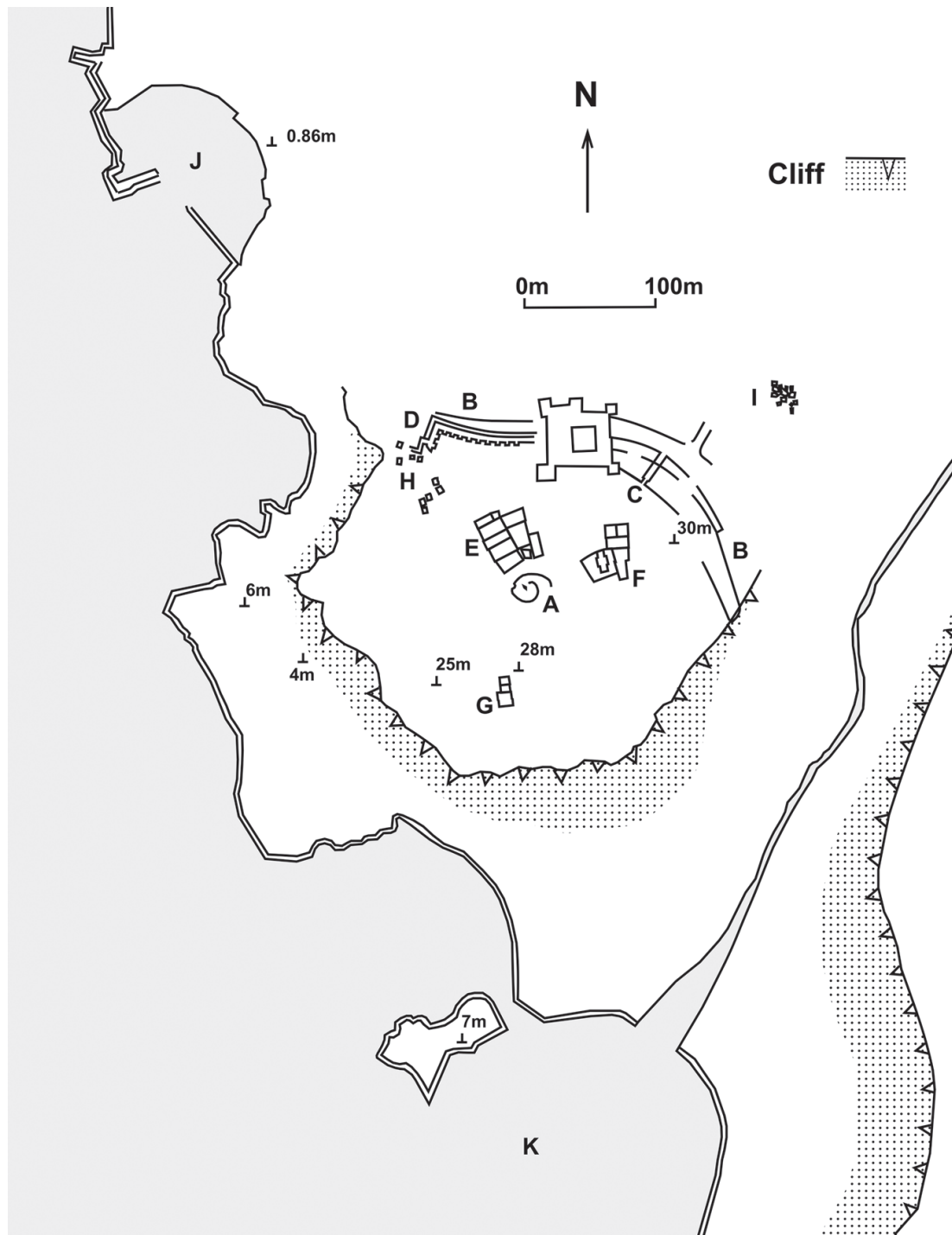


FIGURE 2.4 Map of the archaeological area of ancient Byblos, drawing by the author based on Frost 2001, 203. This map is not intended to be an exhaustive representation of the archaeological area of Byblos, but just a practical tool to locate the structure discussed in the following paragraphs

- |                          |                                            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A: Spring                | B: Bronze Age walls                        |
| C: Northern-eastern gate | D: Staircase and possible secondary access |
| E: Temple of the Lady    | F: Obelisk Temple                          |
| G: Tower Temple          | H: Royal necropolis                        |
| I: Necropolis K          | J: Medieval harbour                        |
| K: El-Skhiny bay         |                                            |

One gate has been found in the eastern part of the walls. It corresponds to one of the main streets of the city (fig. 2.4, C). Its earliest phase dates to the Early Bronze Age (Nacousi 1985, 15). A sharp turn of the walls on the northern side of the higher hill could suggest the presence of another entrance there (Nacousi 1985, 15; Margueron 1994, 20). Nacousi (1985, 15) wonders if this second entrance, which might date to the Middle Bronze Age, could have been reserved for the elite of the city, being somehow associated with the royal tombs and the palace. This second entrance could correspond to a staircase identified just beyond the perimeter of the walls leading from the city to the northern bay beneath (Fig. 2.4, D). One or two other entrances may have been present in the southern walls that have now disappeared. The area delimited by the walls is relatively small and could hardly have hosted more than a couple of thousand people (Margueron 1994, 25). It is thus possible – even probable, according to Margueron (1994, 24–25) – that a lower town existed nearby, perhaps near the harbour (see below).

Remains of various temples and sacred spaces belonging to different periods characterise the central area of the city, around the water source. The Temple of the Lady of Byblos (fig. 2.4, E; §4.3), the main goddess of the city, and the so-called Obelisk Temple (fig. 2.4, F; §4.4) were in use during the Late Bronze Age, and are thus particularly relevant for the current study. Although apparently in use before the Late Bronze Age, the Tower Temple (fig. 2.4, G; §4.2) is also worthy of attention, as it attests practices connected with seafaring and navigation. Other buildings and sacred places existed in the area, but they were in use only before or after the Late Bronze Age and therefore will not be discussed in this book.

Various residential quarters have been identified in the remaining sectors of the area encircled by the walls, while no archaeological remains of a royal palace have been found. Nevertheless, it is likely that the palace was located on the higher hill, near the cliff. It is there that Montet discovered a series of underground royal tombs (fig. 2.4, H; §4.8), and the parallel of Ebla suggests that they were probably located originally within the perimeter of the royal quarters (Montet 1928–1929, 266; Nacousi 1985, 16–17; Margueron 1994, 22). With its dominant position in relation to the city and the sea, the higher hill was well suited for hosting the seat of the royal power. The absence of any archaeological evidence of it from any period remains, however, difficult to explain. Erosion has been proposed as a possible cause (Margueron 1994, 19–20), but the fact that later, Roman, buildings have been preserved raises some

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February 1922 that led Montet (1928, 17) to discover the underground royal tombs. For erosion in the area of Byblos in general, see Sanlaville 1977, 453; Nacousi 1985, 2.

questions: if erosive phenomena erased all the pre-Roman layers, why were the Roman vestiges not equally affected? Another perhaps more likely hypothesis is that the pre-Roman structures were destroyed by the Graeco-Roman building activities in the area (Margueron 1994, 17). Even in this case, however, the total absence of any previous remains is surprising, and still awaits a convincing explanation.

The city seems to have extended beyond the walls only after the Persian period. The only earlier archaeological structure of some importance identified outside them is the so-called Necropolis K (fig. 2.4, I; §4.7). This necropolis is located outside the walls at the south-east of the city and consists of a series of subterranean rooms dug into the slope of the lower hill. Necropolis K was in use from around the twentieth century BCE until the Roman period, with an interruption of a couple of centuries during the Persian period (§4.7; Salles 1980).

Finally, a description of the city cannot be complete without mentioning the harbours and the problems connected with them. The medieval harbour of Byblos, as well as the modern one, is located in a bay just north of the promontory occupied by the ancient city (fig. 2.4, J). As often pointed out, however, its dimensions are quite small, possibly too small to accommodate the important trade and imposing ships implied by the ancient sources (Frost 1998–1999; Margueron 1994, 24). It has thus been suggested that in antiquity the main harbour of Byblos was located south of the city, in the El-Skhiny bay (fig. 2.4, K), which was formerly larger and deeper (Frost 1998–1999, 251–53; Morhange 1998–1999; Frost and Morhange 2000; Collina-Girard et al. 2002; Stefaniuk et al. 2005; Marriner et al. 2008; Carayon et al. 2011; Grimal and Francis-Allouche 2012a, 301–2; 2012b).

This possibility was strengthened by recent geological surveys of the submarine geomorphology of the coast, which have excluded other locations around the tell. In addition, surveys in the sea in front of the bay have led to the identification of two reefs that could have been used for offshore mooring (Frost 1998–1999, 251–53; Collina-Girard et al. 2002; Grimal and Francis-Allouche 2012a, 301–2; 2012b), an idea that may be supported by seven anchors found there (Frost 1998–1999, 252; Collina-Girard et al. 2002, 322; Grimal and Francis-Allouche 2012b, 24). Finally, the location of the Tower Temple, not far from the El-Skhiny bay, could also support the hypothesis that the main ancient harbour was located there, rather than in the northern bay (see §4.2).

As Margueron (1994, 24–25) pointed out, it is likely that a lower town, possibly fortified, was located near the harbour. While the land behind El-Skhiny bay could accommodate such a settlement, no supporting archaeological

evidence has ever been found, and is unlikely to be found in the future, as modern buildings now cover the area.

### 3 Archaeological Evidence – Elaboration of the Data

Dunand's unpublished documentation is currently unavailable for consultation. After his death in 1987, his archives passed to the University of Geneva and were kept there until 2010, when they were given back the Lebanese government. Since then, they have been housed in the National Museum in Beirut (Seif 2012). Consultation there, however, is currently not possible (A.-M. Afeiche and P. Michel, personal communications). The University of Geneva made copies of Dunand's photographs, but not of his notes and written documents. The objects found during the excavations that are kept in the National Museum are also largely inaccessible, because the museum catalogues, which are indispensable for locating the material in the museum storage, were lost during the Civil War (Afeiche, personal communication). A few objects were kept in the museum of the archaeological site in Byblos itself, but some of them were looted in March 2013 (Libnanews 2013 – accessed 6.1.2017).

Therefore, the publications remain the only available sources of information. I have thus based my work on them, developing tools and approaches to analyse them that mitigate some of the issues outlined above. The first of these is a database including all the objects published in Dunand's Volumes I and II. Every entry in the database corresponds to a specific object. The catalogue number and the coordinates within the excavation grids are given; the latter consist in a single number for objects in the first volume, and a combination of two coordinates for objects in the second. Objects found outside the grid receive specific identification codes. A transcription of the description of the object is provided for every entry. All the objects are classified according to their typological categories, in some cases with more detailed subcategories. Additional attributes describing specific features of every object, such as their origin (if local or imported), their period, or their material, is also included.

The database was conceived primarily for this research, and therefore some attributes and categories that are particularly relevant for my work are more developed than others. The division into basic types, however, covers all the objects and offers a general framework that can be improved and extended in the future. The database has been released online (see Appendix B) in the form of a PostgreSQL database with a php interface that allows searches with multiple inclusive and exclusive parameters.

The plans have been elaborated in order to obtain graphic and vectorial digital representations of those areas of the site that were relevant for my research. The database and these digital plans have been further developed and combined using digital tools in order to obtain additional graphic representations and new series of data, including 3D models of some excavated areas, statistical distributions, and approximations of vertical stratigraphic sequences. The database and the procedure to obtain an approximate stratigraphy are presented in the online supplement (cf. Appendix B) and in Appendix C respectively. The results of the application of these digital tools to material from Byblos are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Before that, however, a few definitions need to be introduced:

- **Layer:** natural stratigraphic layers of the site (Late Bronze Age layer, Roman layer). These layers do not correspond to Dunand's levées. Dunand did not describe these layers, but they can be partially and approximately reconstructed.
- **Levéé:** one of the artificial layers produced by Dunand's excavation method (see fig. 2.5).
- **Square:** each of the square-shaped areas defined by the excavation grid used by Dunand from 1933 onwards. Every square is identified by x and y coordinates corresponding respectively to the west–east and north–south coordinates of Dunand's grid (see fig. 2.5).
- **Column:** the vertical projection through all the levées of a square (see fig. 2.5).
- **Excavation Unit:** the one-levée-high parallelepiped defined by a square, that is, each of the sections excavated by Dunand in each levée. Excavation units are defined by three coordinates: the levée number and the x / y coordinates (see fig. 2.5).

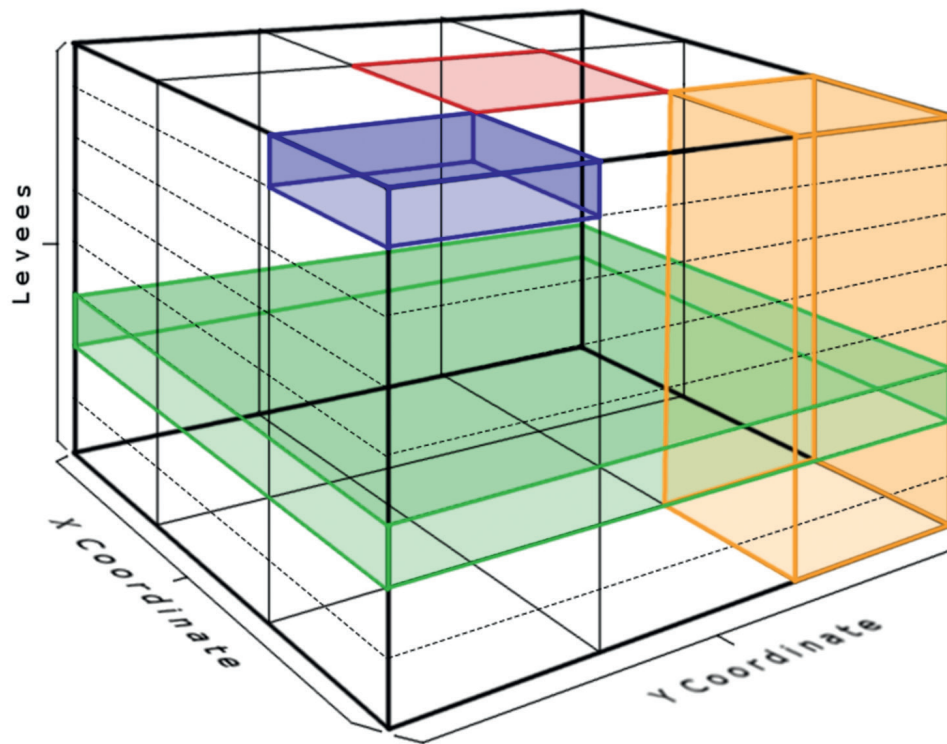


FIGURE 2.5 Graphic representation of the definitions used to describe Dunand's excavation method

Green = Levée

Red = Square

Yellow = Column

Blue = Excavation Unit



# Archaeological Evidence – Quantitative Analyses

## 1 Introduction

In this section I discuss data and observations related to the totality of the site, such as its stratigraphy and the spatial distribution, concentration, and possible associations of specific categories of objects.

## 2 Mycenaean Pottery – Distribution and Spatial Density

In his index of Late Bronze Age Aegean pottery from Syria-Palestine, Leonard (1994) lists fifty-five Mycenaean sherds from Byblos. The majority of them comes from funerary contexts. In particular, thirty-three<sup>1</sup> come from Necropolis K excavated by Salles (1980), and two from the royal tombs (Dussaud 1930, 178–81; §4.8.1).<sup>2</sup> Eleven other sherds come from Dunand's 1926–1932 campaigns,<sup>3</sup> while Leonard lists only four sherds from Dunand's 1933–1938 campaigns.<sup>4</sup> Finally, four or five other sherds that seem not to have been published by Dunand or Salles, and whose provenance is thus unclear, are also recorded in Leonard's index.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that Dunand lists in his catalogue of the 1933–1938 campaigns also eight sherds that he described as Mycenaean or of Mycenaean origin.<sup>6</sup> According to his descriptions and illustrations, however, these all appear to be Protogeometric, that is, Iron Age vessels, rather than Late Bronze Age Mycenaean ones. It is possible that further Mycenaean sherds were present among the numerous fragments that he summarily described but did not illustrate.

It is not clear how Leonard approached the Byblos material. He lists and discusses the sherds that Dunand published with illustrations (drawing or photographs), but he does not state whether during his research he assessed any of

1 Leonard nos. 152, 395, 572, 591, 656, 683, 750, 751, 829, 857, 912, 1224, 1225, 1276, 1515, 1516, 1595, 1730, 1756, 1775, 1823, 1857, 1877, 1878, 1933, 1947, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1978, 2094, 2199, 2300.

2 Leonard nos. 906, 1142.

3 Leonard nos. 214, 228, 229, 244, 283, 501, 582, 984, 1701, 1923, 2066.

4 Leonard nos. 657, 658, 1713, 1827 = Dunand nos. 8755, 8756, 11161, 10899 respectively.

5 Leonard nos. 859, 938, 939, 1792, and perhaps 581, although he wonders if this could be the same as 582.

6 Dunand nos. 7987, 8246, 8743, 8892, 12271, 12478, 12870, 13062.



those pieces that were described but not illustrated by Dunand. The fact that he mentions a couple of sherds with their Beirut Museum catalogue numbers<sup>7</sup> may suggest that he had some access to the excavated material. Alternatively, he could be relying on the works of previous authors who had access to them, as is suggested by the references in his catalogue. In both cases, however, it is not clear how extensive this access was, and if it allowed the assessment of all the sherds found in the city. However, it is worth noticing that Dunand tended to publish images of all the relevant objects he discovered, especially decorated ones. In principle, therefore, the pictures and drawings present in his catalogues may indeed be representative of what was found.

In general, Aegean pottery is rare in the material from the city, while it is abundant in funerary contexts, especially in Necropolis K. The vessels from the city mentioned by Leonard are listed in the table below. Furumark shapes –FS – and motifs – FM – are also given (Furumark 1941a; Furumark 1941b).

### Campaigns 1926–1932

|                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dunand 1088; Leonard no.: 2066<br>Type: unidentifiable form (FS ?/FM 46?)<br>Date: LH IIIA–B<br>Findspot: surface                 | Dunand 1575 + 6549; Leonard no.: 214<br>Type: amphoroid krater (FS 53–55? FM 23)<br>Date: LH IIIA:2–B<br>Findspot: Levée 2, sector 24 + Tranchée 67 |
| Dunand 1188; Leonard no.: 582<br>Type: globular stirrup jar (FS 171/FM Linear)<br>Date: LH IIIA:2<br>Findspot: surface            | Dunand 1861; Leonard no.: 228<br>Type: amphoroid krater (FS 53–55?/FM 1)<br>Date: LH IIIA:2<br>Findspot: Levée 5, sector 27                         |
| Dunand 1444; Leonard no.: 283<br>Type: amphoroid krater (FS 53–55/FM 44)<br>Date: LH IIIB<br>Findspot: Levée 1, sector 22         | Dunand 1956; Leonard no.: 984<br>Type: LM III stirrup jar (FS SJ (Bd)/FM Linear)<br>Date: LH IIIA–B<br>Findspot: Levée 6, sector 26                 |
| Dunand 1474; Leonard no.: 244<br>Type: amphoroid krater (FS 53–55?/FM 5? 36?)<br>Date: LH IIIB(?)<br>Findspot: Levée 1, sector 32 | Dunand 1958; Leonard no.: 229<br>Type: amphoroid krater (FS 53–55?/FM 1)<br>Date: LH IIIA:2<br>Findspot: Levée 6, sector 27                         |

<sup>7</sup> Leonard nos. 581 and 1713.

|                                                                       |                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dunand 1534; Leonard no.: 1701                                        | Dunand 2405; Leonard no.: 501                                    |
| Type: deep rounded bowl/krater with horizontal handles (FS 281/FM 3). | Type: small piriform jug, cutaway/beaked neck (FS 134?/FM 64:20) |
| Date: LH IIIB                                                         | Date: LH IIIA:2                                                  |
| Findspot: Levée 2, sector 5                                           | Findspot: VII 32                                                 |

### Campaigns 1933–1938

|                                                   |                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dunand 8755; Leonard no.: 657                     | Dunand 10899; Leonard no.: 1827                                        |
| Type: globular stirrup jar (FS 171–73/FM Linear)  | Type: deep conical bowl (FS 290/FM Linear)                             |
| Date: LH IIIB                                     | Date: LH IIIB                                                          |
| Findspot: Levée 4, 14/23                          | Findspot: Levée 8, 17/14                                               |
| Dunand 8756; Leonard no.: 658                     | Dunand 11161; Leonard no.: 1713                                        |
| Type: globular stirrup jar (FS 171–73?/FM Linear) | Type: deep rounded bowl/krater with horizontal handles (FS 281?/FM 7). |
| Date: LH IIIB                                     | Date: LH IIIB                                                          |
| Findspot: Levée 4, 14/23                          | Findspot: Levée 9, 14/19                                               |

The difference between the number of sherds from the 1926–1932 and 1933–1938 campaigns published by Leonard should be treated with caution. Was there a real difference in the distribution of Aegean pottery, with higher concentrations in the smaller area excavated between 1926–1932 than in the larger one excavated between 1933–1938? Or does the apparent difference suggest that Aegean sherds from 1933–1938 went unnoticed and are not listed in Leonard's index because of factors related to Dunand's publication? This uncertainty prevents any comparison between the two areas.

In general, the Aegean sherds found under Dunand do not seem to be associated with any specific building. This is true for both the 1926–1932 and the 1933–1938 campaigns. The former group was scattered in the northern and western areas of the site, where residential quarters are identifiable. None of the sherds seems to come from the Temple of the Lady of Byblos or from any other main building of the area. Similarly, the latter group was scattered in the south-eastern part of the area excavated in 1933–1938. Again, no association with any building seems identifiable.

Both closed (stirrup jars) and open forms (kraters, deep conical bowls, small piriform jugs) are attested among these vessels. Closed forms were probably imported for their content, which could have been of various types. Open

vessels, by contrast, could not be used to transport products. Therefore, it can be assumed that the vessels themselves were the object of the trade. As observed by Stockhammer (2011, 55–56), on whom the following discussion depends, it is difficult to say how these vessels were used in Byblos. In the Aegean world, kraters and similar vessels were used in feasting contexts to mix wine with water, before drinking it from other, smaller vessels. It is possible that such feasting practices had been exported to the Levant together with the vessels. Stockhammer, however, points out that, in contrast with what is found in Greece, in the Levant kraters and drinking vessels are rarely found together in the same architectural context. More generally, the proportions of kraters and drinking vessels found in the Levant are usually different from those observed in the Aegean world. Byblos is a good example of that: as shown above, fragments of six kraters and one deep conical bowl have been found in the city, but no Aegean drinking vessel has been identified. A possible explanation is that in the Levant the kraters were used to mix wine and water in the Aegean fashion, but local drinking vessels were used to consume it. According to Stockhammer, some representations on ivories from Megiddo could support this idea. However, it is also possible that imported kraters were used for purely Levantine practices in local social contexts. Stockhammer points in particular to depictions of Levantine people drinking beer from collective vessels through straws<sup>8</sup> and wonders whether Aegean kraters could have been used in the same way.

Whatever the use of these vessels in Byblos, their presence shows that interactions between the city and the Aegean regions was not only about the exchange of primary goods, but it involved also manufactured objects that were probably appreciated for their foreign style and for their “exotic” origins.

The presence of these Aegean vessels in residential areas suggests that their use was not confined to the royal palace and the court, although the lack of precise data about their archaeological context does not allow us to determine whether the residential areas where they were found were associated with members of the elite or with other social classes. Similarly, it is noteworthy that a large number of them has been found in Necropolis K (see below: §4.7), whereas by contrast neither Dunand nor Leonard mentions anything potentially Mycenaean from any temple. The presence of the sherds in the necropolis

<sup>8</sup> This practice appears, for instance, on cylinder seals from Mesopotamia (for instance BM 121545 from Early Dynastic IIIa Ur see Woolley 1934, pl. 200, no. 102; Hornsey 2003, 86–87) and it is also depicted with a single drinker and vessel on the stele of a Syrian soldier found at El-Amarna in Egypt (Berlin ÄM 14122 – See Erman and Spiegelberg 1898; Freed et al. 1999, 239, no. 114). See also Maeir and Garfinkel (1992) for archaeological evidence from the Levantine coast.

shows that the vessels were considered to be prestigious objects worth depositing in tombs. However, it is impossible to say whether they were deposited there because of their economic or symbolic value as objects, because of their content, or because they were associated with a specific system of beliefs in which, for instance, the dead were expected to feast with kraters in the afterlife as they did in this life. Be that as it may, they were clearly valued objects worth using in life and burying with the dead.

The fact that none of these vessels was found in a temple suggests instead that they were not used in ritual contexts and were not offered to the gods within such institutions.<sup>9</sup> This distribution contrasts with that of Egyptian scarabs and other Egyptian imports (§3.3.1, §4.4) that were often found in association with religious buildings. In turn, this suggests a difference in the perception of Aegean and Egyptian imports, and possibly in how the interactions underlying these exchanges functioned (see further §6.4).

### 3 Egyptian Scarabs – Distribution and Spatial Density

Scarabs have a long history in Egypt, having been in use since the Old Kingdom/Early Bronze Age. They are probably the most representative items of Egyptian-foreign interactions. Hundreds of them, belonging to all the main periods of Egyptian history, have been found in Byblos. In Egypt, scarabs were used both as seals and as amulets, and both these functions appear in Byblos, in the form of bullae<sup>10</sup> and of deposits with ritual significance (see below). Scarabs are one of the few categories of objects found in the city for which a full, comprehensive, and detailed set of data is available, at least for the campaigns between 1926 and 1938. The location of most of them is precisely indicated on the published plans, and the exact coordinates of their findspots can thus be easily extrapolated. Moreover, Boschloos's doctoral thesis (2011) studied all the scarabs found in the Levant, including most if not all those discovered in Byblos. One of the most important results of her work is a database available in *pdf* format as an appendix to her thesis, in which every scarab is briefly discussed and dated. Thanks to Dunand's plans and to Boschloos's study, it is thus possible both to locate the findspots of the scarabs and to classify them by period.

<sup>9</sup> We cannot exclude, of course, their use in rituals within a private, domestic context.

<sup>10</sup> Dunand II nr. 9417, 11676, undated (Boschloos 2011–2012, BYB584, BYB519) but both from the area of the Obelisk Temple.

Scarabs can be studied from two perspectives. A first possibility is to look at them as single objects and discuss what information each of them can yield individually. Boschloos's work, in particular her catalogue, is remarkable and exemplary in this respect. Since her study is exhaustive, I only briefly list the relevant Late Bronze Ages scarabs found in the city in the online supplement (cf. Appendix B). The second possibility is to take the scarabs as an ensemble, studying their general distribution and looking for underlining patterns and possible associations with the architectural remains. This is what I do in the following paragraphs.

Only the scarabs found during the campaigns between 1926 and 1938 are considered here, because they are the only ones for which the precise findspots are known. Since the Bronze Age city was located mainly in the area explored in these campaigns (§2.1.3), this is a reasonably good sample. If in the future Dunand's archives will be accessible, it will then be possible to take other sectors of the site into consideration.

### 3.1 *Analysis of the Distribution of Scarabs*

The possibility of displacements and disturbances must be taken into account in the analysis. Small objects can easily end up some distance away from their original contexts. Scarabs could also circulate long after the time when they were made and could enter the archaeological records in periods and contexts unrelated to their original function. Therefore, isolated items without relevant associations have little informative value. By contrast, since it is unlikely that whole groups of scarabs were moved far while remaining coherent, large clusters may attest deliberate deposition or the scattering of originally coherent and therefore potentially meaningful ensembles.

Clusters of scarabs can be identified through analysis of their concentration and density across the site. This can be done with a heatmap or a kernel density estimations, the results of which can be graphically represented on a map. Only the horizontal position of the scarabs is taken into account here. Although this choice might seem problematic, because vertically distant scarabs could seem to be close once they are “flattened” on a single plane, the scarabs are too few and too scattered for this to be an actual issue. Moreover, the majority of the scarabs were isolated finds and therefore their relative vertical position is unambiguous. At the same time, the clusters emerging from these analyses are very few and therefore it is easy to check their vertical coherence.

The scarabs analysed are listed in the online supplement (see Appendix B). The area of the site taken into consideration is marked in white, the areas outside it in light yellow. The white area approximates to a reasonable degree the area excavated by Dunand. Dunand, in fact, never explicitly defined the

precise horizontal limits of his excavations. All the objects found in the 1926–1938 campaigns and published in Dunand's catalogue, however, were found in the squares within this white area. Therefore, it can be assumed that the limits of the white area itself must be close or identical to the limits of Dunand's excavations during those years.

I analyse the scarabs in four chronological groups, namely: pre-New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty, Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, and post-New Kingdom.

As appears from fig. 3.1, the distribution of Early and Middle Bronze Age scarabs is characterised by a smaller cluster in squares 16–12; 16–13 and a larger one in 11–19; 12–19; 12–20 (extending into surrounding areas). Three of the scarabs forming the first cluster were found in levée 10<sup>11</sup> and the others<sup>12</sup> during the demolition of the walls corresponding to levées 5–10. It is thus likely that all these scarabs belong to a single ensemble, but they do not seem to be associated with any relevant structure.

The second cluster is located within the perimeter of the Obelisk Temple and is clearly associated with it. These scarabs can be divided into three groups on the basis of their vertical distribution. Four scarabs<sup>13</sup> come from levées 19–21 or from the walls corresponding to levées 16–20, three<sup>14</sup> come from levées 14–15, and seven<sup>15</sup> from levées 2–6. These last seven were found in layers near the surface and were clearly out of context. Nonetheless, as discussed below (see §4.4.6, §4.4.7), they could also come from the Obelisk Temple. Such a concentration of scarabs can hardly be accidental or due to later disturbances. Rather, they were deposited intentionally in or near that area, possibly as offerings.

The distribution of Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs (fig. 3.2) is characterised by a main cluster that is again located within the perimeter of the Obelisk Temple. Some of these scarabs come from later layers and are thus out of context. As in the previous case, however, it is very likely that they come from a single source within the temple and that their displacement was mainly vertical and probably due to Roman construction works in the area (see §4.4.6, §4.4.7).

This cluster is even more relevant if we consider its relatively short span of time, limited to the period from Thutmose III to the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty. In particular, ten scarabs have been found in the area of the temple.<sup>16</sup>

11 Dunand II nos. 11467, 11468, 11476.

12 Dunand II nos. 11772, 11773, 11774, 11775, 11776, 11777.

13 Dunand II nos. 15885, 16746, 17099, 17343.

14 Dunand II nos. 13030, 13367, 13428.

15 Dunand II nos. 7728, 8166, 8181, 8668, 8669, 8992, 9394.

16 Dunand II nos. 7633, 7645, 7651, 7772, 8127, 8167, 8996, 9896, 11053, 12416.



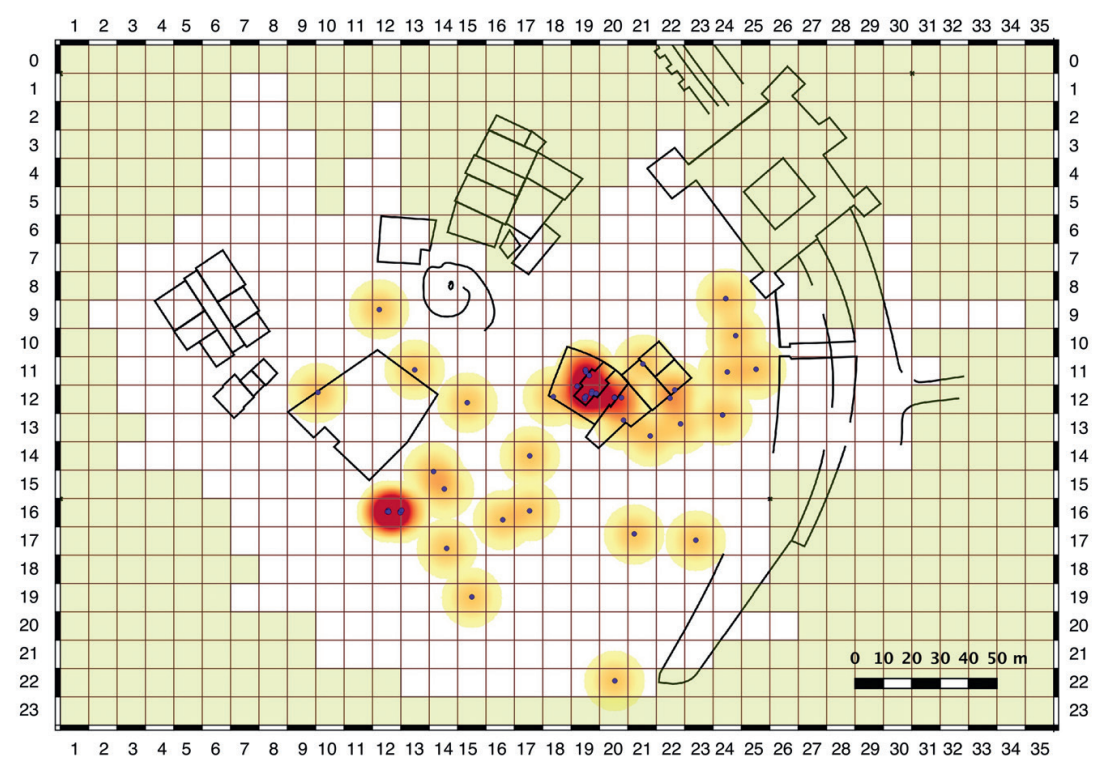


FIGURE 3.1 Heatmap showing the distribution of pre-New Kingdom scarabs (Early and Middle Bronze Age). Each dot represents one scarab

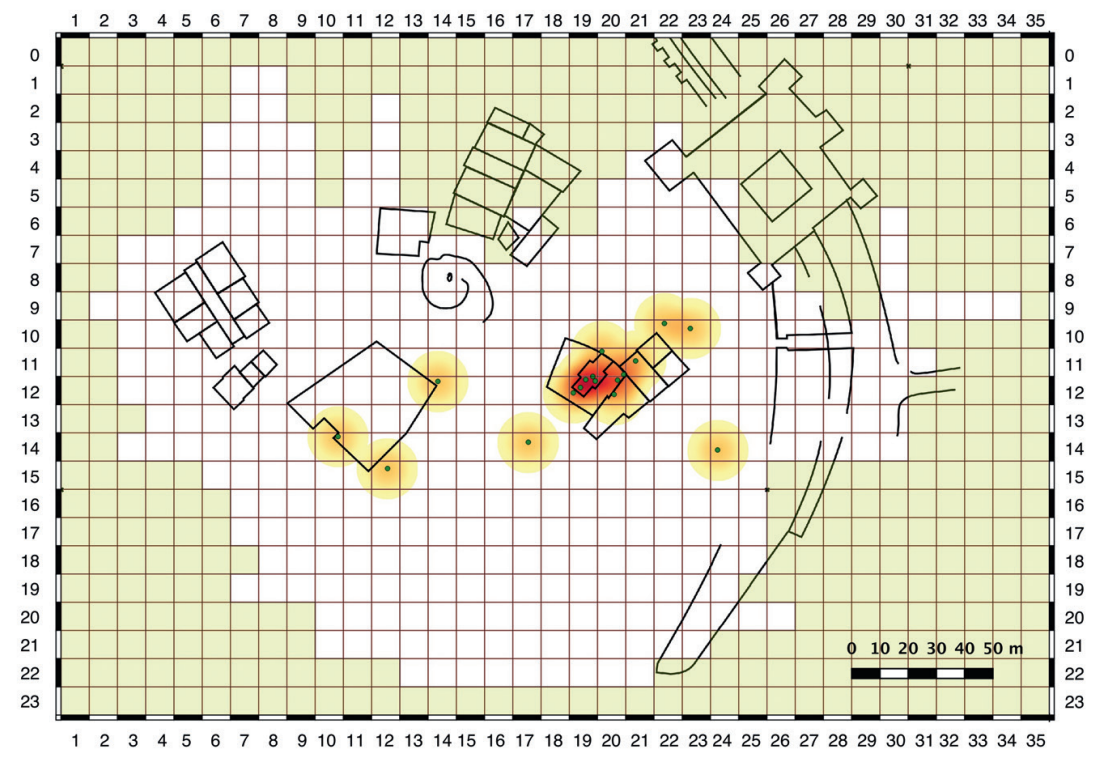


FIGURE 3.2 Heatmap showing the distribution of scarabs dating to Eighteenth Dynasty. Each dot represents one scarab

Four of them bear a royal name and can thus be dated with more precision: one (7645) belongs to Thutmose III, one (8127) to Amenhotep II and two (9896, 11053) to Amenhotep III. The remaining six date to the Eighteenth Dynasty but are uninscribed (see the online supplement, cf. Appendix B).

In general, the distribution of pre-Late Bronze Age and early New Kingdom scarabs shows some continuity and is characterised by high concentrations within the Obelisk Temple. This pattern disappears in the following periods, as is apparent from figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 shows the distribution of scarabs dated to the second half of the New Kingdom (Nineteenth–Twentieth Dynasties). A couple of scarabs of this period were located within the perimeter of the Obelisk Temple, but they are isolated finds and no consistent cluster can be identified. A small cluster of three scarabs can be seen in square 12–33, not far from the north-eastern corner of the temple but outside its perimeter. This cluster is significantly smaller than those observed for earlier periods, and the scarabs composing it were not vertically close to one another.<sup>17</sup> In view of the small numbers and the seeming lack of association with any relevant architectural feature, this cluster is likely accidental. In general, scarabs of this period seem to be scattered more uniformly throughout the city. The same situation can be observed for the scarabs dating to the Iron Age, as is evident from figure 3.4. Some of them were indeed found in the area of the Obelisk Temple, but no cluster comparable to those observed in figs. 3.1 and 3.2 is present anywhere on the site.

In conclusion, it appears that the distribution of scarabs on the site is not completely accidental and probably changed over time. In particular, the presence of scarabs in the Obelisk Temple indicates that these objects were not only appreciated for their practical function as seal or amulets but were also considered worthy enough to be donated as offerings or to be included in hoards in a sacred area. Moreover, the clusters of pre-Late Bronze Age and Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs associated with the Obelisk Temple, as well as other Egyptian objects found there (see §4.4), raise questions about the role of this building in the interactions with Egypt.

Finally, the fact that clusters of scarabs are attested during the pre-Late Bronze Age period and the Eighteenth Dynasty but not in later times is worthy of attention. This observation is not particularly meaningful on its own, and many explanations for such a change could be advanced, including accidental archaeological factors. But when this set of data is considered in combination with the written sources, a common pattern seems to emerge. I return to this point in §6.4 and §6.5, after the analysis of the written sources.

<sup>17</sup> Levées 1, 3, and 7, respectively scarabs 7656, 8193, and 9913.

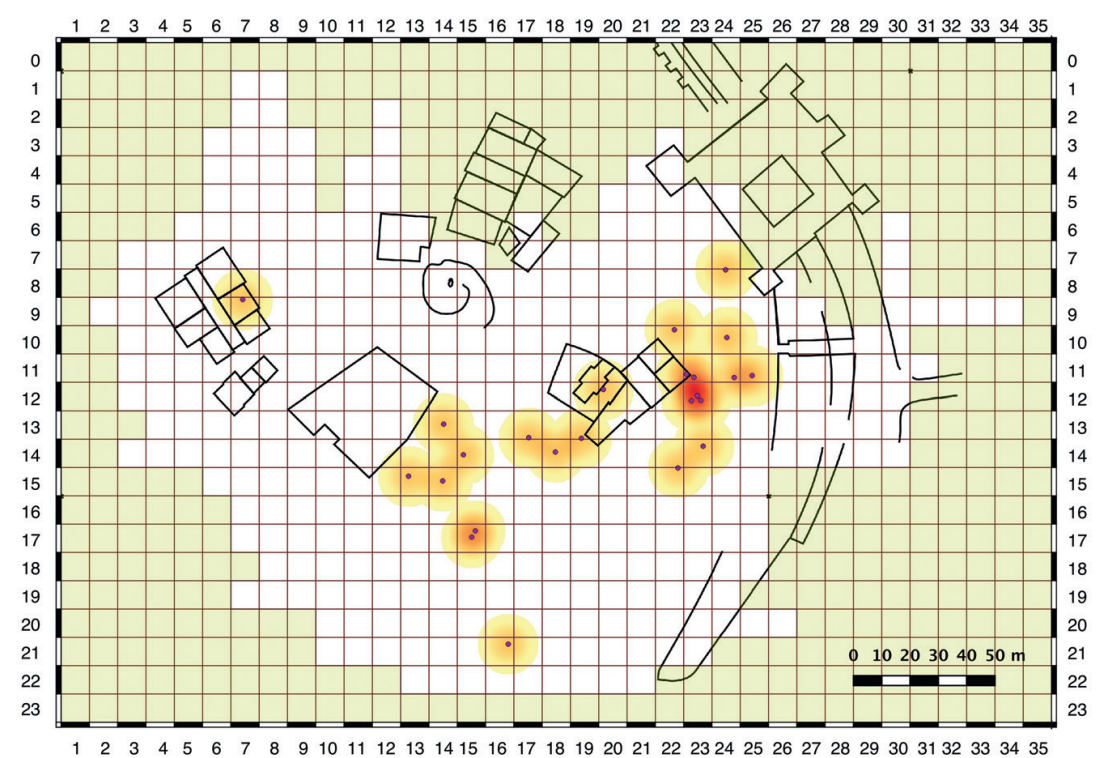


FIGURE 3.3 Heatmap showing the distribution of scarabs dating to Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. Each dot represents one scarab

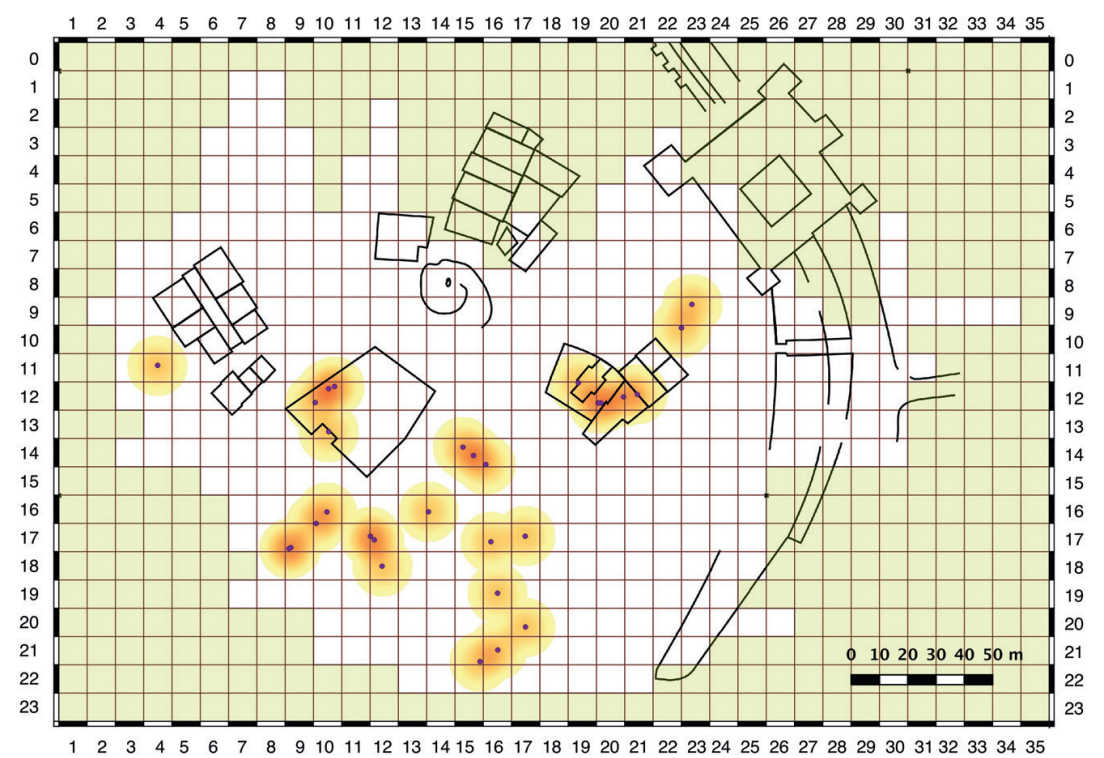


FIGURE 3.4 Heatmap showing the distribution of post-New Kingdom scarabs (Iron Age). Each dot represents one scarab

#### 4 Spindle Whorls and Loom Weights – Distribution and Spatial Density

The excavations at Byblos yielded hundreds of spindle whorls and loom weights. These objects are worthy of attention, as they are attestations of the textile industry of the city. In the ancient Near East, spindle whorls and loom weights were made of local stones, bone, ivory, clay and terracotta, and possibly wood (Laurito et al. 2014, *passim*; Matoïan and Vita 2014, 318; Peyronel 2014, 129–30). All these materials are attested also in Byblos (see Dunand 1939, *passim*; Dunand 1954, *passim* and the database in the online supplement, cf. Appendix B). The presence of spindle whorls suggests that wool was used (Breniquet and Michel 2014, 2), although vegetal fibres like flax could also be spun (Militello 2014, 266). Spinning was just one among various steps in the production of textiles: before spinning it, the wool had to be collected, cleaned and prepared, and afterwards it had to be weaved (Andersson Strand 2014; Breniquet 2014, 65–71; Breniquet and Michel 2014, 5). The presence of spindle whorls indirectly attests these processes. Spinning required specific technical skills (Breniquet and Michel 2014, 5), and in the eastern Mediterranean and in the Near East it was probably a predominantly female activity, at least judging from the presence of spindle whorls in women's graves (Breniquet and Michel 2014, 3).

Loom weights are attested in the northern Levant in the Middle Bronze Age (Peyronel 2014, 132). Similarly to spindle whorls, the presence of loom weights attests to textile manufacturing and to the use of looms, which usually do not survive as they were likely made of wood. The weight and thickness of the loom weights play an important role when weaving, and therefore these two parameters could be used to infer information about the fabric that was produced (Laurito et al. 2014, 155).

The data available about the spindle whorls and loom weights found in Byblos, however, present a number of problems. First, Dunand did not indicate their precise findspots on the plans, so that only their levées and excavation squares are known. Moreover, no detail about their actual weight is usually given, most of the descriptions are very limited, and illustrations are available for only a few of these objects. As a result, no precise identification, classification, or chronological sorting can be made. If the spindle whorls and loom weights are still available (they should be in the National Museum in Beirut), a study of the originals would be very valuable. Any such research, however, is beyond the scope of this book.

Because of these limitations, only the general distribution of these objects across the site can be assessed here. Even such a simple analysis, however, can yield useful results, as it allows highlighting areas of the city that were involved



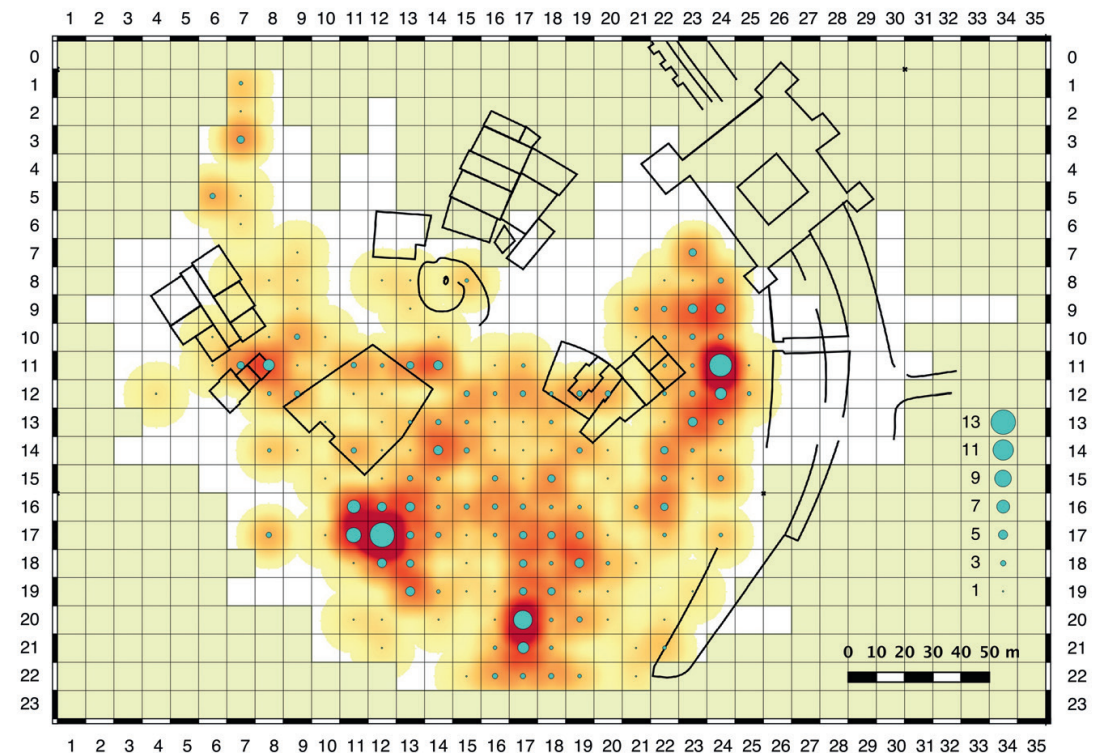


FIGURE 3.5 Heatmap showing the distribution of spindle whorls

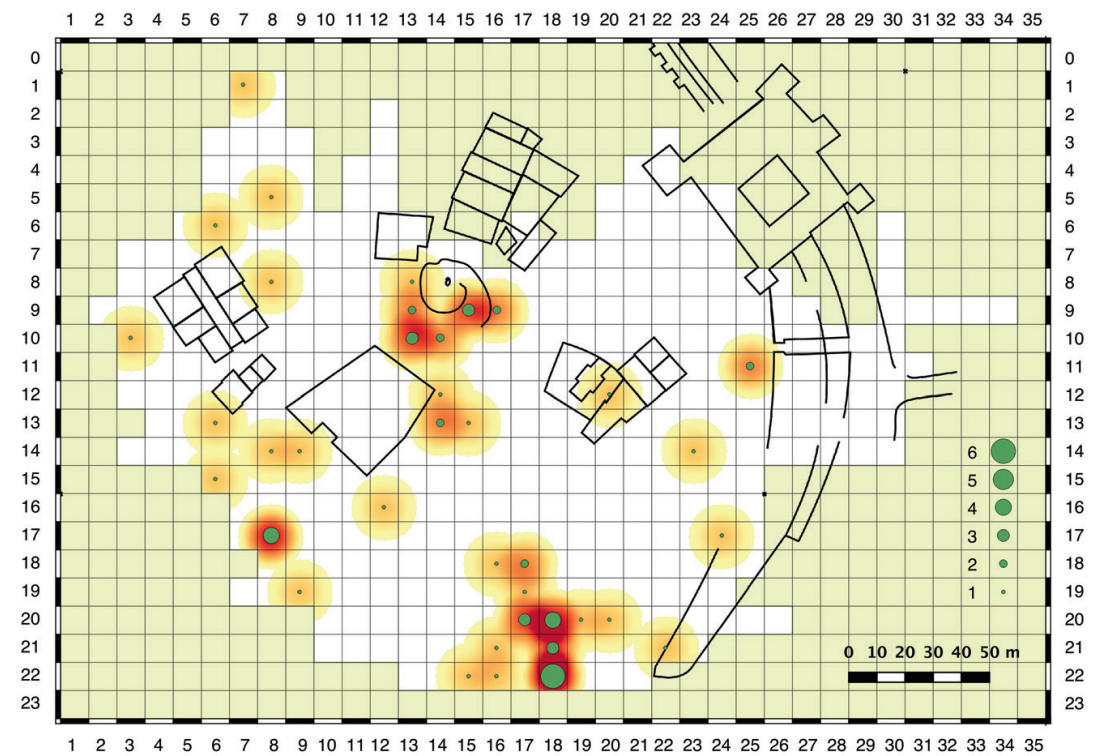


FIGURE 3.6 Heatmap showing the distribution of loom weights

in these artisanal activities. The horizontal distribution of spindle whorls and loom weights can be seen in figure 3.5 and 3.6.

Spindle whorls are quite numerous (405 from the excavations and one surface find, according to Dunand), and they were found all across the site. Three major clusters can be identified, in 11/24–12/24, in 16/11–16/12–17/11–17/12, and in 20/17–21/17. Other small groups are attested in 9/23–10/23, in 11/7–11/8, in 11/13–11/14, in 14/14, and more generally in the area between 17/17 and 18/19. None of these groups appears to be associated with any major building. The small cluster in 11/7–11/8 is located in the area of the Tower Temple, whose remains, however, are located well below the levées where the spindle whorls were found and therefore are likely unrelated with them. None of the major clusters is associated with any temple. The three spindle whorls found in the area of the Obelisk Temple may either be out of context and to have ended up there by chance, or they may represent an occasional ritual activity, considering that weaving is associated with cult places in the archaeology and texts in the Levant. An examination of the actual objects may clarify this point. The three main clusters could represent production areas within the residential quarters of the city.

A similar distribution can be observed for the loom weights. Only sixty-three loom weights have been identified by Dunand. As in the case of the spindle whorls, they are scattered across the city. Again, three clusters can be identified, one in the area between 10/13 and 9/15, one in 17/8, and one in 20/17–20/18–21/18–22/18. The second cluster, in 17/8, does not seem to be associated with anything relevant. The third, in 20/17–20/18–21/18–22/18, is roughly in the same area of one of the spindle whorl clusters, partially overlapping it in 20/17. Their vertical distribution, however, is rather distinct and may speak against any direct association between them (see online supplement, cf. Appendix B). Nevertheless, the presence of clusters of both loom weights and spindle whorls may indicate that this area had a special relation with textile production. Workshops for the production of textiles managed by the palace or by local temples are indeed attested in the Bronze Age Levant and in the Aegean region (Breniquet 2014, 58, 71–73; Breniquet and Michel 2014, 3, 8–9; Nosch 2014, 375, 389–90; Rougemont 2014, 358–62). Moreover, texts from Ugarit mention also various specialists such as “shearers” (*gzzm*) “spinners” (*gzlm*) or “weavers” (*u/išparu, mḥṣ/mḥiṣu*), who were working seasonally and were receiving rations from the palace (Vita 1999, 486–87). A similar organization could have existed in Byblos as well, and the clusters of spindle whorls and loom weights just described could be a trace of it. For now, however, the available evidence is not conclusive.

Finally, the cluster of loom weights between 10/13 and 9/15 is strikingly close to the main water source of the city. I think this association may be



accidental, although one may also consider that water was crucial for the dying of textiles.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that one of the Mycenaean sherds (Dunand 10899) was found near one of the main clusters of spindle whorls, in 17/14. If any association existed between them, this could suggest that the area was occupied by a wealthy residence whose inhabitants appreciated imported vessels and were involved in textile production (§3.2). Obviously, one sherd is not enough to draw any definitive conclusion.

Finally, the absence of clusters of spindle whorls or loom weights in temples or other relevant buildings suggests that textile manufacture took place in private contexts and was not connected with the city's religious institutions, unlike what may have been the case for some other artisanal activities.<sup>18</sup> Nothing, however, excludes the possibility that workshops managed by the temples existed in other areas of the city, far from the religious buildings themselves.

## 5 Egyptian Objects and Inscribed Blocks from Byblos

### 1. ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENT WITH THE NAME OF THUTMOSE III (1)

#### *Description*

#### – No. Montet 947

- Findspot: out of the excavated area
- Material: limestone
- Dimensions: not known
- Pictures: Montet 1928–1929, 249, pl. clii; see fig. 3.7.
- Notes: described in Woolley 1921 and published in Montet 1928–1929, 249, pl. clii. Woolley's drawing is not accurate, as Montet's photograph demonstrates. The block should be in the National Museum in Beirut, but I was not able to see it.

#### *Archaeological context*

Found by Woolley in 1921 near a house at the north-east of the city, on the road towards Tripoli. Nothing dating to the Late Bronze Age was identified in the area, and only some Roman columns were present. It is clear that the block was not in its primary context, and was brought there from the city (Woolley 1921, 200; Montet 1928–1929, 249).

<sup>18</sup> For instance, Dunand (1954, 651) identified one of the rooms of the Middle Bronze Age Obelisk Temple as an atelier of metalworkers.



FIGURE 3.7 Block Montet 947

PHOTOGRAPH FROM MONTET 1928–1929, PL. CLII, LINE DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR

### Discussion

The block bears traces of a relief. The cartouche of Thutmose III is visible on the right, followed by the formulae *dj 'nh dd w3s mj r'* (“given life, stability, power, like Re”).<sup>19</sup> On the right traces of the king’s Horus name are visible. Between the formulae and the Horus name, the top of a staff ending with a human head can be recognized. Given the general distribution of the elements forming this scene, it is likely that the staff was held by two arms beneath the Horus name, and represented the Ka of the king (Woolley 1921, 200; Montet 1928–1929, 249 – in general on representations of the Horus name holding a Ka pole see Eldamaty 1999 with references). As already observed by Wooley (1921, 200–201), the presence of the Ka gives no indication on the nature of the lost scene, but it suggests that the relief comes from a religious context (see also Eldamaty 1999, *passim*). It is thus likely that this block comes from a chapel or a shrine sponsored by Thutmose III, possibly the same one mentioned by Minmose in his biographical inscription (§5.2.2).

## 2. ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENT WITH THE NAME OF THUTMOSE III (2)

### Description

- No. Dunand II 13439
  - Findspot: levée 15, 12/20
  - Material: limestone
  - Dimensions: 40,5 cm × 26,5 cm

<sup>19</sup> This is the standard reading of this formula. The order of the signs in the relief, however, seems to be *dj dd w3s 'nh mj r'*. Or alternatively, the signs have to be understood as being disposed in two columns of unequal width.

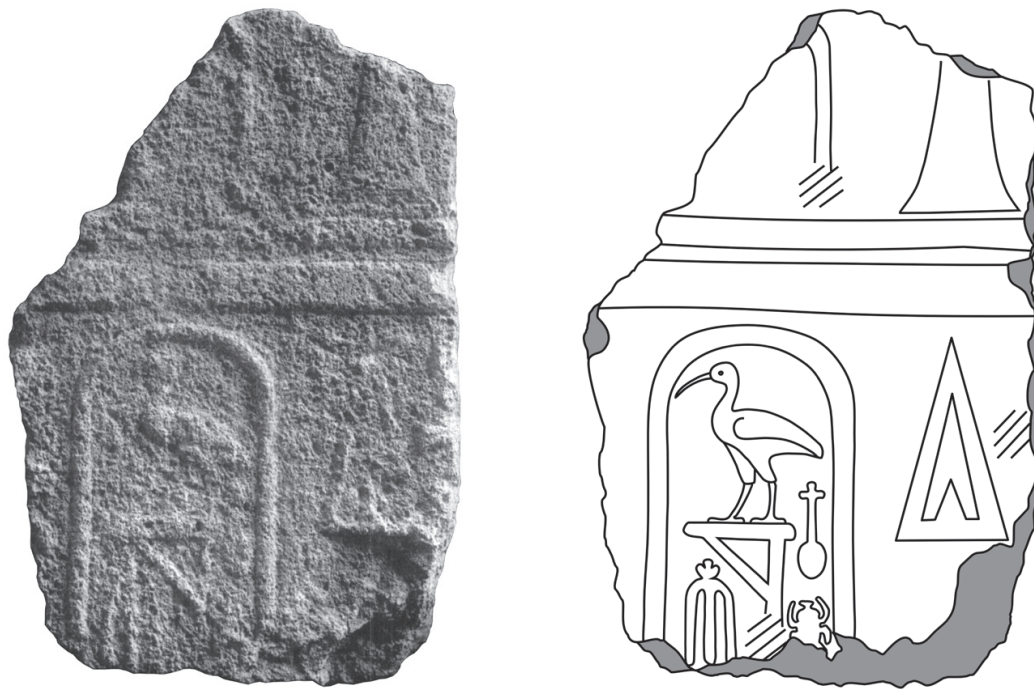


FIGURE 3.8 Block Dunand II 13439

PHOTOGRAPH FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CLV, LINE DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR

- Pictures: Dunand 1954, pl. clv; see fig. 3.8.
- Notes: the exact findspot of this stele is indicated on Dunand's plans

### *Archaeological context*

Found in the courtyard of the Obelisk Temple, near the western wall and the antechamber in levée 15, 12/20 (see Dunand's plans for precise find-spot and below §4.4.4).

### *Discussion*

Dunand (1954, no. 13439) points out that the block is recut on the sides and broken at the top, at the bottom, and at the back, and identifies it as the fragment of a stele, although he does not provide any explanation for this interpretation. In fact, the style of the relief and the dimensions of the cartouche (ca. 20 cm high) suggest that this was not a stele, but a block belonging to an architectural structure, possibly the same block as no. 1 above. The similarity in the composition of the reliefs of the two blocks<sup>20</sup> strongly supports this interpretation.

20 The cartouche followed by a *dj* formula under a horizontal line mirrors quite well what appears on the other block.



The block was found in the courtyard of the Obelisk Temple, but the re-cutting suggests that this was not its primary location. However, it could have ended up there already during the Late Bronze Age, as it was found at a deep level, in levée 15 (see §4.4.4 below). When and how this may have happened remain unknown, although one possibility is discussed below in §4.6.

### 3. STELE OF RAMSES II

#### *Description*

- No. Montet 24, 25
- Findspot: area of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos
- Material: limestone
- Dimensions: not known
- Pictures: Montet 1928–1929, pl. xxxiv; see fig. 3.9.
- Notes: 2 fragments



FIGURE 3.9 Fragments Montet 24, 25  
PHOTOGRAPH FROM MONTET 1928–1929, PL. XXXIV

### *Archaeological context*

These two stele fragments were found in 1919 by Montet on the surface of the site, in the area of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos. According to local people, the stele was found a few years earlier during building works for the foundation of the house of a man called Ibrahim Housamy. It was then broken in four parts: two of them were used to build the house itself and were never recovered, while the other two are those found by Montet. According to Montet's plans (pls. xxi and xxii), Ibrahim Housamy's house was located on the northern part of the Temple of the Lady (Montet's "temple syrien,") and this is probably why he believed the stele came from the temple itself (Montet 1928–1929, 59).

### *Discussion*

Fragment no. 24 bears an image of the king wearing the Atef crown and presenting offerings to the lost figure of a deity. The style is clearly Ramesside. This fragment was probably part of the lunette. The formula *s3 'nh h3[=f nb] mj r'* ("[all] protection and life around [him] like Re") is visible behind the king. Fragment no. 25 bears traces of at least seventeen horizontal lines of text. According to Montet (1928, 49) nothing could be read except traces of the cartouche of Ramses II in line 3, while Kitchen managed to transcribe some scattered words (*KRI* II 224, see also Obsomer 2012, 123).

The text is too fragmentary to suggest a translation. It seems, however, to mention a military expedition in Syria, as the following words and expressions can be recognised: "[m]y army and chariots as well" (line 9), "extend the borders of Egypt" (line 10), "the paths [...] Kharu" (i.e., Syria, line 14), "my army was going while I was alone" (line 15). It thus seems that the text likely commemorated an early Syrian campaign of Ramses II, as did his Nahr El-Kalb inscriptions (Obsomer 2012, 123, see below §4.9). Two other fragments of steles by Ramses II were found in Tyre (*KRI* II 401), where a stele recording a campaign of Seti I was also discovered (*KRI* I 117, II 401.1–3; Loffet 2000; Wimmer 2002, 2, 6, 8 with references). Steles of Ramses II are known also from other Levantine sites, including Adhlun in southern Lebanon (*KRI* II 223; Wimmer 2002, 8–9 and *passim*, with references; Obsomer 2012, 123).

It is interesting to observe that the text seems to be dated to year 4 (line 1), but the form of the name suggests it was engraved after year 21 (Obsomer 2012, 66–67). Similar cases are attested in the reign of Ramses II (e.g., the "stele of year 8" from Manshiyet El-Sadr – see *KRI* II 360–62, Obsomer 2012, 306–7), and a date after year 21 would agree with other evidence suggesting an Egyptian interest for the city also after the Peace Treaty with the Hittites, as discussed in more detail below (§6.6.5)

The presence of a stele by Ramses II in Byblos, possibly in the temple of its main goddess, adds to other evidence that this king was active in the city, in particular in its sacred areas (see also §4.5 and *passim*).

#### 4. FRAGMENT OF EGYPTIAN RELIEF

##### *Description*

- No. Dunand II 11673
  - Findspot: square 12/20, found during the demolition of the walls between levée 5 and 10.
  - Material: not known
  - Dimensions: 32 cm × 21 cm
  - Pictures: Dunand 1954, pl. clv; see fig. 3.10.

##### *Archaeological context*

This block was used as a building stone in one of the walls of square 12/20, between levée 5 and 10. Dunand did not specify which wall it comes from, but the area is that of the Obelisk Temple.

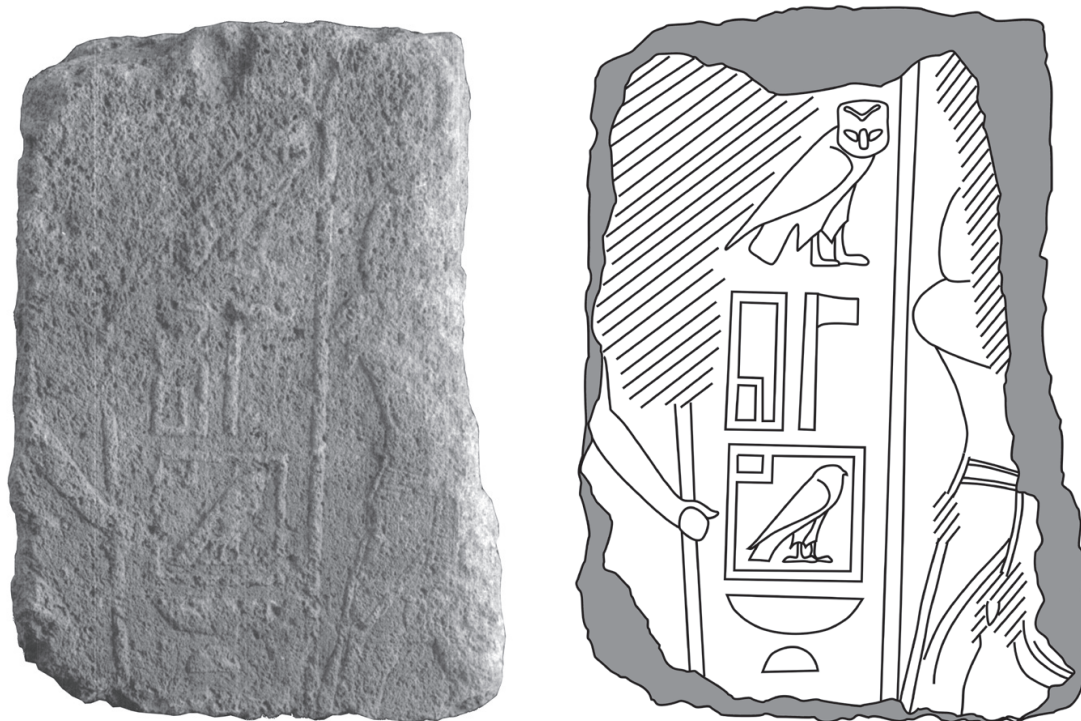


FIGURE 3.10 Block Dunand II 11673  
PHOTOGRAPH FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CLV, LINE DRAWING BY THE  
AUTHOR



### *Discussion*

Dunand dated this block to the Hyksos period or to the New Kingdom. It bears traces of two human figures on the sides, with a column of text in the middle. One arm holding a staff is visible on the left, while on the right only one leg and the back of the torso and head of another figure survive. The latter probably represents an offering king, judging from the outfit. As observed by Baines (personal communication), his legs look quite far apart, which makes it difficult to say how the scene should be restored. The most informative detail is the fragmentary inscription in the middle, which reads: ...] *m ḥwt-nṯr ḥwt-ḥr nbt* [*kꜣp-n-y* ..., "... in the temple of Hathor Lady [of Byblos ...]" This fragment confirms that the Lady was associated with Hathor not only in Egypt but also in Byblos itself. Since Thutmose III commissioned a chapel or a shrine for Hathor Lady of Byblos in the city (see §4.6 and *passim* below), this block could perhaps come from there, as suggested for blocks no. 1 and no. 2 above.

## 5. STATUE OF DJEHUTY

### *Description*

#### – No. British Museum *EA* 69863

- Findspot: unknown, first seen in mid 1970s in a dealer's stock in Paris.
- Material: black granite (Yoyotte 1981, 44–45), the stone is likely not local and could have been imported (Baines, personal communication)
- Dimensions: 20 × 18 × 20 cm (<http://www.britishmuseum.org>, collection online, *EA* 69863 – last visited 6.1.2017)
- Pictures: Yoyotte 1981; see fig. 3.11.

### *Archaeological context*

This statue was first seen on the antiquities market in the 1970s by Jean Yoyotte, who was told that it belonged to a Lebanese man (1981, 41). It was sold by Christie's London in 1986 (Gubel and Bordreuil 1987, 319) and it was later acquired by the British Museum (*EA* 69863 – Bourriau 1989, 209). The original archaeological context is unknown, but its inscription suggests that it may come from the Temple of the Lady of Byblos. Gubel found some reportedly reliable sources in Lebanon who confirmed that the statue was discovered accidentally in Byblos, in an area at the south-east of the ancient city (Gubel and Bordreuil 1987, 317, 319).

### *Discussion*

The statue represents its owner, Djehuty, as a seated scribe. He holds on his legs an open papyrus roll with a brief biographical inscription facing him. The



FIGURE 3.11 Statue of Djehuty (1-2)  
PHOTOGRAPHS FROM YOYOTTE 1981



FIGURE 3.12 Statue of Djehuty (3-4)  
PHOTOGRAPHS FROM YOYOTTE 1981

head is missing as well as the upper part of the torso; the lower part is well preserved. Another inscription running around the base of the statue continues the text of the papyrus; the end of a third inscription can be seen on the back pillar.

Since the statue comes from the antiquities market, its authenticity has to be evaluated with caution, especially because in the 1970s fake artefacts attesting interactions between Egypt and the Levant were relatively common. Yoyotte (1981, 44–45), however, discussed these issues and concluded that both the statue and the inscriptions are probably authentic. Djehuty was an officer of Thutmose III who fought with him in the Levant. His career is also known from other documents. Djehuty is also the protagonist of the “Capture of Joppa,” a Nineteenth Dynasty Late Egyptian tale (Lilyquist 1988; Simpson 2003, 72–74; Morris 2005, 138). On the back pillar, the final sections of two columns are visible. The surviving text is the following:

Col1: ...]n nb(t) pt ḥnwt tꜣwy dj=s prrt

Col2: ...] kꜣ n jmy-rꜣ ḥꜣswt mḥt(yw)t sꜣ nsw dḥwty mꜣ-ḥrw

Col1: ...]n (end of toponym), Lady of the Sky, Mistress of the Two Lands, may she give all that comes out

Col2: ...] (to) the Ka of the overseer of the northern foreign lands, the royal scribe Djehuty, justified.

We have here fragments of a standard offering formula. The deity addressed in the inscription is a goddess, as ḥnwt “mistress” and the feminine pronoun =s demonstrate, and she is associated with a foreign locality whose name ends with -n. As suggested by Yoyotte (1981, 46), the name of the deity can be reconstructed as nbt kꜣpn, the “Lady of Byblos.” The titles Djehuty bears here are similar to those in the inscription on the papyrus and on the base, which reads:

papyrus: <sup>1</sup>jp bꜣkw šsp <sup>2</sup>jnw jnw n bꜣw <sup>3</sup>ḥm=f m <sup>4</sup>ḥtr nt<nt?> <sup>5</sup>rnpt m-ꜣwrw  
base-front [nw] rtnw šḥntj m imww r tꜣ-mrj base-right [jn] jmy-rꜣ ꜣ(?) ḥꜣs(w)t  
mḥt(yw)t sḥ nsw dḥwty mꜣ-ḥrw base-left jrn sꜣb jmn-ms msy js-snb

Assessing the bꜣk-contributions, receiving the jnw-contributions brought to the awesomeness (bꜣw) of His Majesty as ḥtr-contribution of the year from the hand of the chiefs of the northern Levant (rtnw), being transported southwards in ships to Egypt by the overseer of the door(?) of the northern foreign lands, the royal scribe Djehuty justified, begotten by the dignitary (sꜣb) Amenmose and born of Isseneb

According to the inscription, Djehuty oversaw the contributions of the northern Levantine vassals, which were sent to Egypt by sea (a detail attested also in the Annals of Thutmose III – see §5.2.1 and §5.2.5). He is said to be a royal scribe, while his second title seems to be “overseer of the door(?) of the northern foreign lands” (Yoyotte 1981, 48; Lilyquist 1988, 15, 62). The word ʕ, “door,” was marked as doubtful by Yoyotte, and it is hard to recognise it in his drawing. Djehuty thus stated that he was in charge of the Egyptian administration in the northern Levant, an office suggested also by the title of *jmy-r ḥʕswt mḥtt* (*et similia*) “Overseer of the northern foreign lands” attested in other documents (Yoyotte 1981, 47; Lilyquist 1988, 62, *passim*). The title of *jmy-r jwʕyt*, “overseer of the garrison” that he bears on other objects (Yoyotte 1981, 47; Lilyquist 1988, 7, 11, 15, 62) attests to his military role. We know that the overseers of the northern foreign lands were installed in conquered territories to supervise the military and economic situation there, and to assure the interests of the Pharaoh among the local vassals (Yoyotte 1981, 47; Murnane 1997; Shirley 2011, 295 n. 15). The probable dedication of the statue to the Lady of Byblos makes it likely that he performed at least some of his functions there, in the city. This raises questions about the role of Byblos in the Egyptian administration of northern Levant at the time of Thutmose III, a problem that is further discussed below, in §5.2.5.1.

## 6. FRAGMENT OF STONE VESSEL WITH NAME OF RAMSES II

### *Description*

#### – No. Dunand I 6031

- Findspot: at the centre of Tranché 61, on the surface.
- Material: alabaster
- Dimensions: not known
- Pictures: Dunand 1939, pl. xxxviii; see fig. 3.13.

### *Archaeological context*

Found by Dunand during the campaigns 1926–1932 on the surface of an explorative trench (Tranché 61). Clearly out of context.

### *Discussion*

This fragment of a stone vessel bears the name of Ramses II. The form of the name suggest that it was inscribed, and therefore reached Byblos, after year 21 of his reign. It was found out of context and therefore little can be said about it. Like the stele no. 3 above, however, it is evidence of interactions between this Pharaoh and the city after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty with Hattushili III



(Obsomer 2012, 67–68; Edel 1997; Kitchen and Lawrence 2012, i 573–94, no. 71, ii 57–60, with references).



FIGURE 3.13

Fragment of stone vessel Dunand I 6031

PHOTOGRAPH FROM DUNAND 1939, PL. XXXVIII

## 7. FRAGMENT OF STATUE OF RAMSES III

### *Description*

#### – No. Dunand II 13658

- Findspot: surface, square 8/11
- Material: green amphibolite
- Dimensions: not known, but clearly a small object.
- Pictures: Dunand 1954, pl. clvii; see fig. 3.14.

### *Archaeological context*

Surface find, no relevant archaeological context.

### *Discussion*

Fragment of Egyptian statue, only the head and the shoulders are preserved. The back pillar bears traces of the Horus name of Ramses III (*KRI* V 256.15; Morris 2005, 707; James 1966). This is the only attestation of a Pharaoh of the Twentieth Dynasty in Byblos. The statue was clearly out of context, and therefore nothing can be said about the circumstances that brought it to the city. The dimensions of the statue are not known, but it is clearly a small object, which could have reached Byblos in various ways.





FIGURE 3.14 Fragment of statue Dunand II 13658  
PHOTOGRAPH FROM DUNAND 1939, PL. CLVII

## Archaeological Evidence – Sectors and Areas of Interest

### 1 Introduction

The so-called Tower Temple (§4.2), the Temple of the Lady of Byblos (§4.3), the Obelisk Temple (§4.4), the Chapel of Ramses II (§4.5), Necropolis K (§4.7), the area of the Royal Tombs (§4.8), and the Nahr El-Kalb area (§4.9) are discussed in the following paragraphs. A discussion of the evidence about the temples is presented in §4.6.

The so-called Egyptian Temple is also occasionally mentioned, but it is not presented in detail, because it originally dates to the Persian period (Dunand 1939, 70–72) and it is therefore beyond chronological focus of this book. Suffice it to say here that, as the name suggests, the temple seems to have had some connections with Egypt. Its most remarkable feature is the presence of four Egyptian-style seated statues. We do not know whom this temple was dedicated to, although Dunand suggested it could be related to the cult of Adonis (Dunand 1939, 79). A stele found in front of it suggests that it may have been connected with the Temple of the Lady of Byblos, which is nearby (*CIS* 1.1; Dunand 1941). The temple has never been published in detail, but extensive descriptions can be found in Montet 1928–1929, 29–44 and Dunand 1939, 66–79.

### 2 The Tower Temple

The so-called Tower Temple was located in the southern part of the city. Dunand did not explore the area until after 1938, so neither the temple nor the material associated with it appear in his published volumes. The temple was not dismantled by Dunand, and in 1998 new measurements and analyses were performed (fig. 4.1, Frost 1998–1999, 255), while accurate plans based on unpublished notes were published in 2008 (Dunand and Lauffray 2008, 391–95).

The temple dates to the end of the III millennium BC (Piquet 11–13 – see Frost 1998–1999, 257–58; Dunand and Lauffray 2008, *passim*), and nothing in the published material points to it having been in use during the Late Bronze Age. Its possible function, however, makes it relevant for the present discussion.

Frost (1998; 2002; 2009) suggested that this temple worked as a point of reference on the coast, perhaps even as a sort of lighthouse for sailors heading

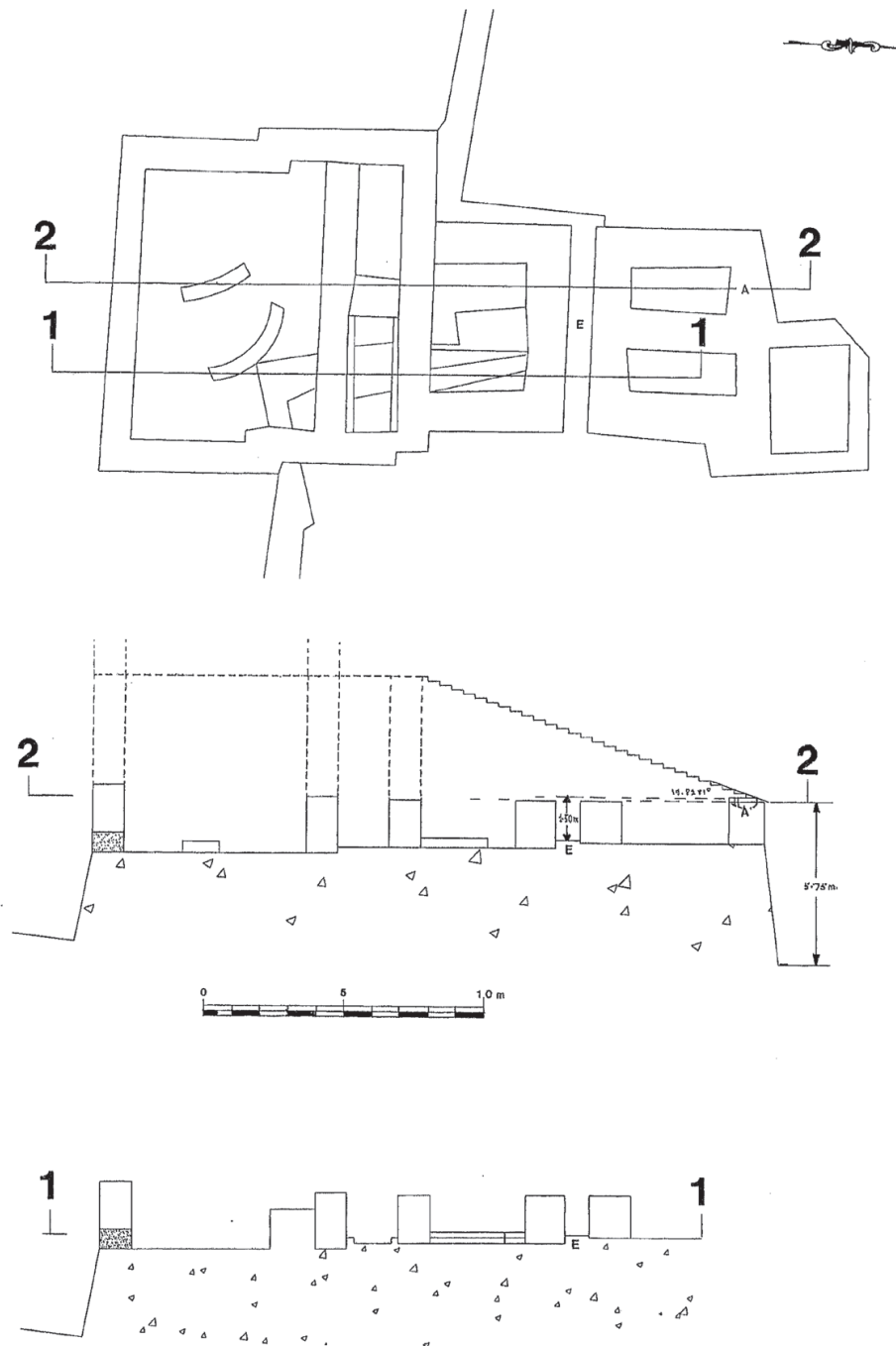


FIGURE 4.1 Plans and sections of the Tower Temple  
FROM FROST 1998–1999, 256

towards the city. Three of its features, and the parallel provided by a temple in Ugarit, point in this direction. First, one of the most distinctive characteristics of this building is the presence of stone anchors<sup>1</sup> not only deposited around it<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Many of these have disappeared since their discovery (Frost 1998–1999, 253).

<sup>2</sup> As attested in other buildings and areas of the city, such as the Sacred Enclosure (Frost 1998–1999, 247) and Necropolis K (Salles 1980, 12).



FIGURE 4.2 Scale drawing of the Tower Temple anchors. The first five (see first row, from left to right) are the dummy-anchors used in the staircase. The dotted line marks the tread of the first step. The sixth anchor on the right was used as a corner stone  
FROM FROST 1998–1999, 254

but also integrated within its masonry. In particular, one was used as a corner-stone, while five “dummy” anchors or anchor-shaped blocks form the first step of its monumental staircase (see 4.2; Frost 1998–1999, 253). These “dummy” anchors have only their top surface flattened and dressed, whereas their backs are rough-cut or unworked. Their “dummy” nature suggests a purely votive function, while their very presence points to a strong connection between the temple and the maritime world.

The imposing staircase and the thick walls indicate that the temple was probably a tall building, possibly similar to a tower, standing out against the surrounding houses (Frost 1998–1999, 255).<sup>3</sup> Although its original height cannot be established, it has been calculated that even the basement on which the cella was located was about 6m above the street level and was accessible through an imposing staircase of about twenty steps (Frost 1998–1999, 255). Moreover, the temple is not far from the edge of the hill, near the sea and just above the El-Skhiny bay at the south of the city, where the ancient harbour

3 But contra see Saghie-Beydoun 2009, 35, n1, who thinks that the foundations were not solid enough for a high tower, and argues that the view of the temple would have been obstructed by the buildings around it.

may have been located (see §2.2). According to Frost (1998, 247, 257), there are two submerged parallel reefs that could have been used for offshore mooring just in front of the temple. Given the Tower Temple's elevation and its position, it must have been a distinctive feature of the urban landscape, especially from the perspective of a ship sailing towards the city.

Such a building would not be unique on the Levantine coast. The Temple of Ba'al at Ugarit also had the form of a tower and, as in Byblos, many stone anchors were found associated with it. These characteristics, combined with Ugaritic texts mentioning sacrifices performed on its roof, which implies the presence of smoke by day, and possibly of fire by night, have led some scholars to suggest that this building could have worked as a lighthouse. The Tower Temple in Byblos could have had the same function (Frost 2009, 396), although the temple in Ugarit is much later, being active during the Late Bronze Age. Given the example from Ugarit, however, it is possible that a similar construction existed also in Late Bronze Age Byblos, possibly as a functional heir of the Tower Temple, either in the same location or elsewhere.

The presence of the Tower Temple fits with the commercial orientation of Byblos. Moreover, the presence of such a structure attests the integration of the city within an international network of exchanges from the Early Bronze Age onwards, because lighthouses were needed by crews of ships that approached the city from the open sea; local fishermen and small boats sailing for short distances near the coast did not need them to orient themselves. At the same time, the presence of votive anchors in both Byblos and Ugarit points to the existence of a common system of beliefs among the sailors of the region. Frost suggested that this framework was not limited to the northern Levant but was also shared by Egyptian and Aegean crews.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, this common background and piety attests and pertains to the everyday life of the sailors and of the wider population, rather than to the international relations and exchanges of palaces and kings, and within this framework, these sanctuaries had the double function of protecting the ships through the benevolence of their gods and through their very practical function as lighthouses.

4 Votive anchors have been found also at Gawasis in Egypt (on the Red Sea), in Kition, and are even mentioned in the *Argonautica* (1:950). A Cypriot anchor, associated with Cypriot pottery, was found also in the Temple of Karnak, a possible offering of a Cypriot crew (Frost 1969, 440–41; Sayed 1980; 1998, 253; Frost 2009, 395–401; Zazzaro and Abd el-Maguid 2012). It has to be noted, however, that the Egyptians were probably employing Levantine personnel in their crews, possibly already during the Old Kingdom (see e.g., Bietak 1988).



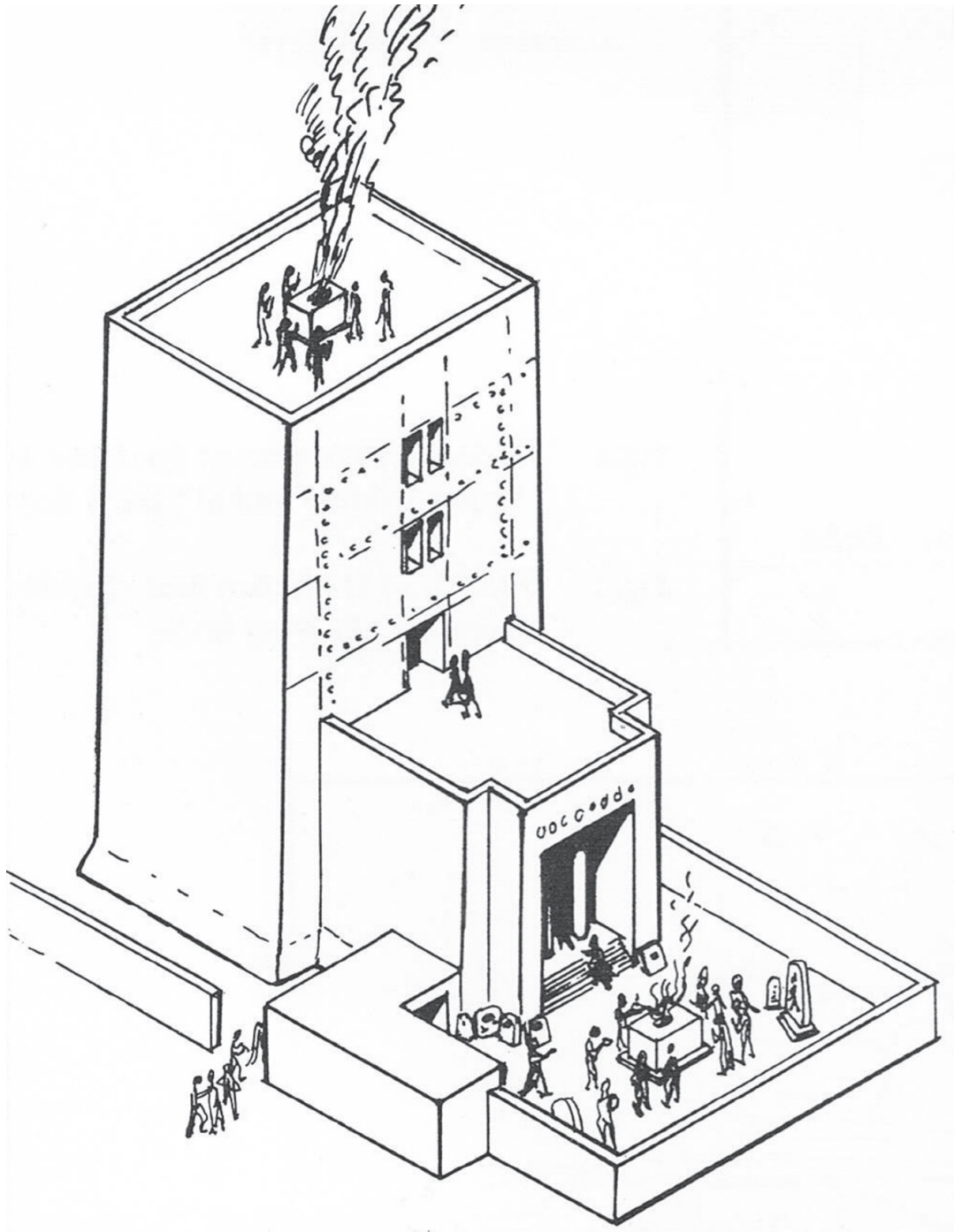


FIGURE 4.3 Reconstruction of the Temple of Ba'al at Ugarit  
FROM CALLOT 1987, 34

### 3 The Temple of the Lady of Byblos

The Temple of the Lady of Byblos was the most important sanctuary in the city. Unfortunately it was excavated in part under Montet (1928, 45–59) and in part during Dunand's first seasons (1939, 79–87), so that its publication is particularly problematic (Sala 2015, 36). In particular, just two sketches exist

for Montet's excavations (1928, pls. xxi, xxii), while only a few plans for the whole sector were published by Dunand in his first volume. Only the horizontal organization of the temple can be gleaned from these records, but no vertical reconstruction, and obviously no stratigraphy, can be inferred. Moreover, the irregular grid used by Dunand during his first campaigns makes it extremely complicated to try to identify the precise provenance of the objects found. Some more precise information can be obtained from the descriptions of the temple that both Montet (1928, 45–59) and Dunand (1939, 79–87) offered. None of these sources, however, is precise enough to allow a full study of the temple during the New Kingdom. Slightly more precise data are present in Saghiéh-Beydoun (1983) and in the sixth volume edited by Lauffray (2008). Both these works, however, focus only on the Early Bronze Age phases of the building and therefore are not relevant for the present study.

Another potential problem is that no Late Bronze Age layer may have survived in the temple. This possibility seems to be supported by the fact that Dunand first reported the discovery of a stone tiled floor dating to the third century CE and then affirmed that Middle Bronze Age layers, including a Middle Bronze Age stone tiled floor, lay just beneath (Montet 1928–1929, 45–47, 61; Dunand 1939, 62–63, 79, 144, 157). He mentioned no Late Bronze Age structure between these two floors, and since in general only foundations of Middle Bronze Age and subsequent structures remained, all vestiges of the Late Bronze Age may have been destroyed. This is a real possibility because the whole area seems to have been levelled in later times, possibly to create an even surface that joined the nearby hill (Dunand 1939, 80). The terrain was also greatly affected by building activities of the Roman and medieval periods.

What can be said about this temple is therefore limited. We know that this was the largest and most important temple of Byblos, and its long history supports its centrality in the life of the city. Indeed, the temple displays a remarkable continuity of use from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period (Montet 1928–1929, 59; Dunand 1939, 81).

According to the available archaeological evidence, the temple seems to have been completely rebuilt only once, at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, after the possibly violent destruction of an older sanctuary implied by ruins bearing traces of fire that were found under the Middle Bronze Age floor.<sup>5</sup> The temple underwent various modifications, restorations, and additions throughout its history (Dunand 1939, 86–87, 278–79). Dunand stated that the exact sequence and chronology of these architectural works was very difficult

5 Layers of ashes found throughout the site and dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age indicate a period of generalised destruction (Sala 2015, 44; Dunand 1939, 81).

to determine at the time of the excavations, and such task is now impossible so long as we have to rely only on the published plans and descriptions.

As Dunand noted (1939, 85), the poor state of preservation of the temple means that nothing can be said about its economy and functioning. A few observations, however, have been made for its architectural organization. Taking the Temple of Solomon as a functional parallel, Dunand suggested equating Room A with the *ulam* (portico), Room E with the *hekal* (main hall) and Room B with the *debir* (inner sanctuary) of Jerusalem's sanctuary (see the description given in the Bible, 1 Kings 6:3–5; note that the actual spatial disposition of the rooms in the Temple of Solomon is different from that suggested by Dunand for the temple in Byblos). He also suggested that an altar was present near the foundations of the western wall of Room E (fig. 4.4; see also Dunand 1939, 3, 65, 80–81, 85, pls. xi, xii).

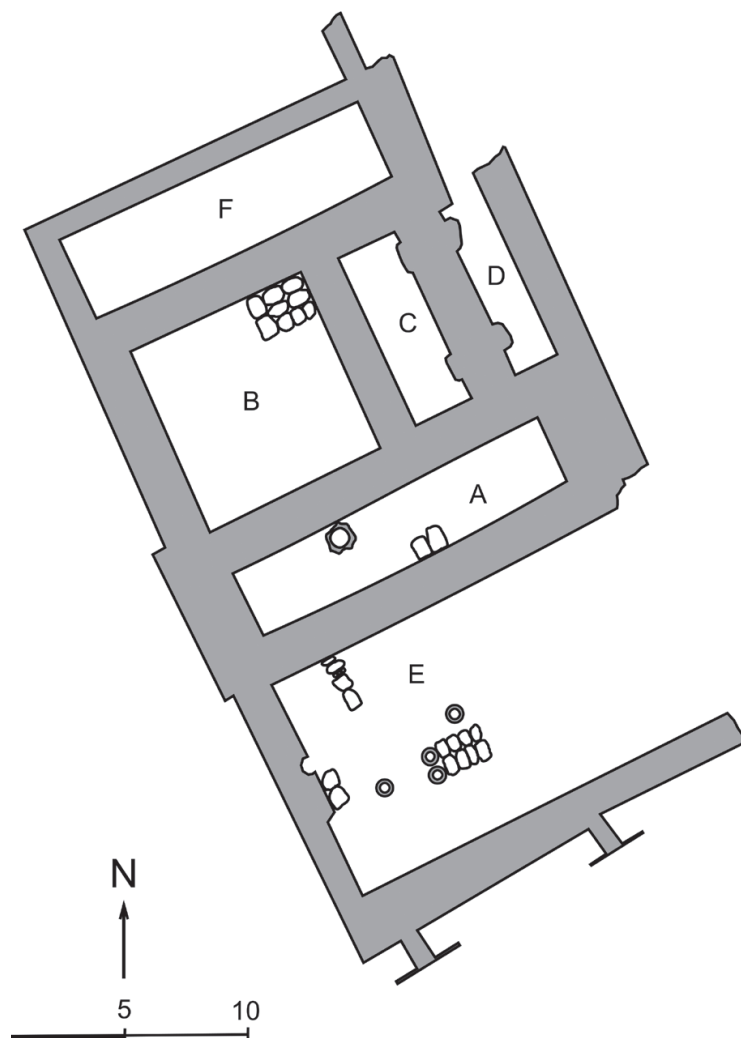


FIGURE 4.4 Plan of the foundations of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos dated to the Middle Bronze Age  
DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR BASED ON MATTHIAE  
1975, 52

Busink (1970, 439–41) agrees in identifying Room B with the cella, but thinks instead that Room E may have been a forecourt (“Vorhof”). He also rightly observes that according to Dunand’s plans, some kind of structure seems to have been present in the northern corner of Room B. Dunand however did not describe it, and it is therefore impossible to explain what such architectural element was supposed to be, if an altar, a bench or something else.

By looking at architectural features such as the thickness and arrangement of the surviving foundations, Matthiae (1975, 53–56, see also Sala 2015, 39) suggests instead to interpret Room E as a roofless sacred courtyard, Rooms F and A would be lateral spaces closed by some small dividing wall without foundations, while Room B, C and D would correspond to the cella, the antecella and the antechamber respectively of the temple itself. This structure looks more reasonable, and as observed by Matthiae, it has some parallels in its organization and in its dimensions in other contemporary Middle Bronze age temples of the northern Levant, such as Tell Mardikh IIIA Temple D or Tell Atshanah/Alalakh Temple VII (see also Sala 2015, 44). A Mesopotamian influence can perhaps be seen in the structure of these temples, but according to Matthiae (1975, 56–57, with references) a corresponding strict typological classification would be contradictory, as local traditions and developments have to be taken into account. Moreover, the case of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos, the very poor state of preservation and publication does not allow us to further explore these potential influences.

Dunand (1939, 62, 65, 85–86) stated that nothing can be said about the elevation of the temple, except that a few blocks decorated with uraei may come from a cornice with Egyptian motifs – as attested in Phoenician naoi – and the shaping of some stones could suggest that Egyptian-influenced, non-vertical, battered walls were present. In addition, Dunand (1939, 84–85) thought that also the base of an Egyptian-style column found by Montet (1928, 46, fig. 13) could be connected with the temple.

Written sources point to strong connections linking Egypt with the goddess of Byblos and her temple (Montet 1928–1929, 265–305; Diego Espinel 2002; see further §5.2.2, §5.2.3, §6.5.0.1). These connections are confirmed, at least in part, by the archaeological evidence, as various Egyptian and Egyptianising objects of the Old and Middle Kingdoms were discovered in offering and foundation deposits under the Middle Bronze Age floor (Montet 1928–1929, 61–139; 1939, 81–84). It thus seems that the temple was indeed involved in interactions with Egypt. Yet because Late Bronze Age layers have not been found on the site, it is impossible to evaluate the temple’s role in these interactions at the time. It is however worth mentioning that Montet believed that the fragments of the stele of Ramses II found near a house in 1919 could come from the Temple of the Lady (Montet 1928–1929, 48–49 – see §3.5 above where the stele is discussed

in detail). If so – and this is likely as steles were usually erected in temples – it could have been dedicated in the temple to celebrate the king's campaigns in the northern Levant (as the apparent mention of military activities suggests), possibly before the construction of the Chapel of Ramses II discussed in §4.5.

A few other objects found in the area of the temple should be mentioned here, although they do not necessarily date to the Late Bronze Age/New Kingdom. The first is a fragment of a limestone statue of a sitting man, possibly a priest, found by Montet (1928, 57, no. 32). The published description and picture are not precise nor clear enough to date it. According to Montet an Egyptian inscription is present on the statue, and the words ...] *ḥwt-ḥr nbt* [..., "... Hathor Lady of ..." can be read. The statue is interesting because, like the one belonging to Djehuty discussed in §3.5, it clearly does not belong to a king; rather, it attests the veneration enjoyed by the goddess of Byblos among the Egyptians outside the royal sphere.

The case of the fragments of statues bearing the names of Sheshonq I, Osorkon I, and Osorkon II found by Montet (1928, 48–57, nos. 26–31) and Dunand (1939, 115–17, no. 1741) is different. Although of obvious Egyptian origin, the statues bear Phoenician inscriptions stating that the contemporary kings of Byblos dedicated them to the Lady. These statues are important because they attest the presence of interaction between Egypt and Byblos after the New Kingdom. At the same time they are intriguing because they do not present any specific feature that could associate them with the goddess, except for the secondary Phoenician inscriptions attesting that they were offered to the lady by the local king of Byblos, rather than by the Egyptian Pharaohs. This could indicate that the Egyptian perception of the goddess had somehow changed by the time of these Twenty-second Dynasty kings (see below §6.5.0.1). However, since these statues do not date to the Late Bronze Age/New Kingdom, they will not be discussed further here.

#### 4 The Obelisk Temple

The Obelisk Temple, which Dunand also called the *Temple de Rechef*, is the best preserved building in the city. It is located in the central area of the site, next to the spring and the Temple of the Lady of Byblos (map 2.4). The temple was built at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, on remnants of a previous cultic building (the "Temple en L") that was probably burned down at the end of the Early Bronze Age (Dunand 1954, 115, 898 and passim; Sala 2015, 44). According to Dunand, it remained in use, in one form or another, at least until the Iron Age (Dunand 1954, pl. ccxii, point xii, temple de Rechef). The temple owes its name to an impressive series of obelisks and standing stones located



in a court around its cella. They were erected during the earliest phases of the temple itself, and Egyptian influence is likely, especially since one obelisk bears a dedicatory inscription in Egyptian engraved by the Byblian Middle Bronze Age king Ibishemu, which praises the Egyptian god Heryshef (Dunand 1954, 646 and no. 16980; see below §4.4.7). A local component is, however, also present: the veneration of obelisks and standing stones (*baetyli*) is well attested in the West-Semitic area and in the Phoenicio-Punic world in particular, both archaeologically and in written sources (e.g., Hutter 1993; van der Toorn 1997; Sala 2015, 46–47; see also §4.4.7). The obelisks of Byblos are an early example of that tradition and of its intersection with Egyptian motifs.

Most of the obelisks were found standing in their original positions, while a few others were discovered buried in a *favissa* (Sala 2015, 47). The whole area of the temple seems to have been deliberately kept free from buildings until the Roman period or a little earlier. Dunand interpreted this fact as a clue to the area having maintained some sacred connotation without interruption until a very late period. He went further and suggested that the tips of the tallest obelisks could have remained visible and have helped to maintain the memory of the sacred place even when its principal buildings had disappeared under layers of deposits (Dunand 1954, 35–36, 128–29). This hypothesis is very difficult to prove, especially without precise data about the stratigraphy of the area and about how the courtyard acquired its fill. Nonetheless, the dimensions of the obelisks and their upright position must have been a remarkable and undisturbed feature of the area for a very long time.

The Obelisk Temple does not seem to be mentioned in any written source. Unlike the Temple of the Lady, it is relatively well preserved, and Dunand's publications are enough to establish its plan and to enable a study of its architectural phases.

Finkbeiner (1981) was the first to analyse the architectural remains. Starting mainly from Dunand's plans, he studied the architectural development of the "Temple en L," of the Obelisk Temple, and of the later structures in the area. For the Obelisk Temple itself, he recognises four major building phases (Finkbeiner 1981, 60–67). Finkbeiner's remarkable work is an extremely valuable starting point that can be further improved with the help of digital technology. In particular, if one starts from Dunand's plans and integrates them with Finkbeiner's results, it is possible to reconstruct a 3D model combining the reconstructed phases with the architectural remains at the moment of their discovery. In this way, one can "reconstruct" Dunand's excavations, and through a virtual exploration of such reconstruction one can verify and improve upon what Finkbeiner proposes.

In particular, Finkbeiner focuses on the architectural remains of the temple, and he orders the architectural phases according to a relative chronology, but

he does not try to date them within an absolute chronological frame, nor does he discuss the associated material finds. By contrast, my 3D reconstructions can be combined with the objects published by Dunand in his catalogue and plans. These objects can be sifted, identified, and selected through my database (see online supplement, cf. Appendix B). Moreover, since Dunand indicated on the plans the precise findspot of many inscribed or artistically and historically relevant items found during the campaigns of 1926–1938 (§2.1.3), the locations within the temple of a significant number of these objects can be determined and their exact coordinates extrapolated. They can then be plotted in 3D models and associated with the architectural phases in order to define an approximate absolute chronology.<sup>6</sup>

The details of this approach are discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 4.1 *Elaboration of the Data*

The treatment of the archaeological evidence from the Obelisk Temple involves various steps. First, the plans published by Dunand need to be digitised and the coordinates for each wall in each levée need to be extrapolated. This can be done semi-automatically, for instance using digitiser software to retrieve data from images. Once the coordinates of the walls have been extrapolated, they can be plotted into a 3D modelling software, automatically or manually triangulated, and 3D representations of the individual walls can thus be obtained (figs. 4.5–4.8). This process corresponds essentially to “reconstructing the sliced onion,” as Dunand suggested in the description of his excavation technique (§2.1.3).

This process of digitisation makes it possible to check the accuracy and coherence of Dunand’s different plans. For instance, sections of the same wall can appear on two plans in slightly different alignments, probably due to the small errors inherent in manual recording. In general, however, Dunand’s plans are quite precise and fit together well with one another, which supports their reliability.

Within these 3D reconstructions, walls can be divided or grouped into related ensembles on the basis of their reciprocal relationships (such as continuity, superimpositions, or cross-cutting relations). The many pictures of the excavations of the temple that Dunand published (1954, pls. xxi–xxxvi), and a few additional plans of specific phases published in his catalogue help in this process (Dunand 1954, fig. 22, pp. 27–28; fig. 767, pp. 644–45; fig. 1007, pp. 895–96). The building sequences can then be combined to group the various architectural remains into specific building phases, which in turn can be combined

<sup>6</sup> One naturally has to take into consideration the possibility that the findspots of these objects do not necessarily correspond to their original primary context, as I explain later.

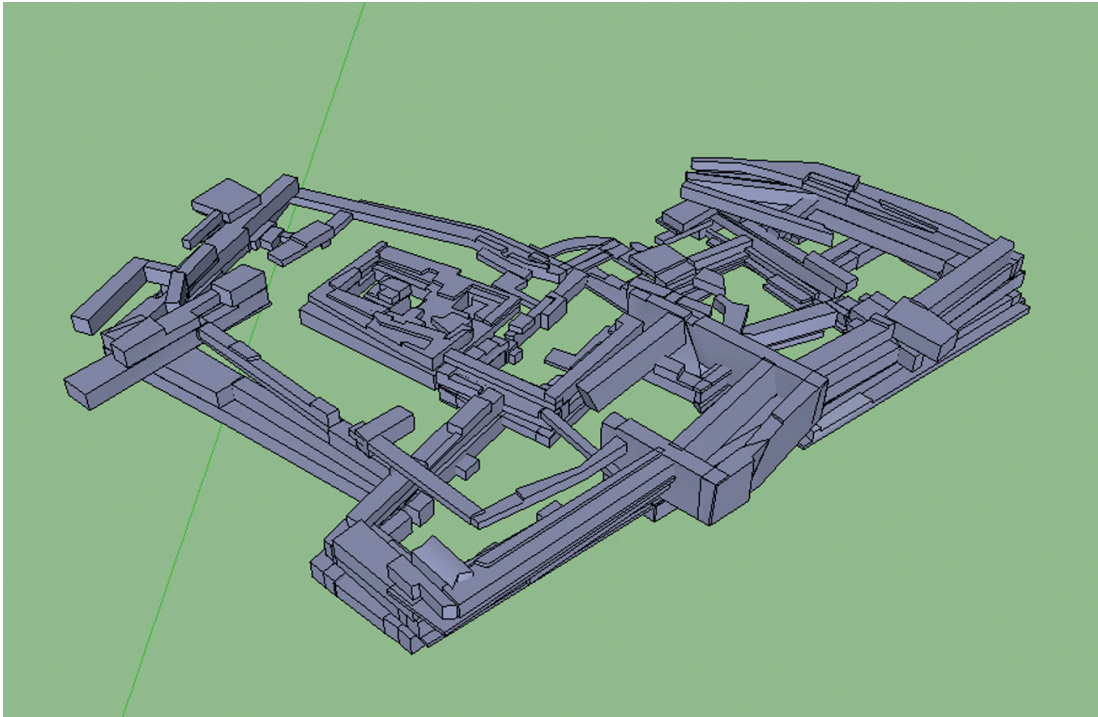


FIGURE 4.5 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated, from a south-eastern perspective

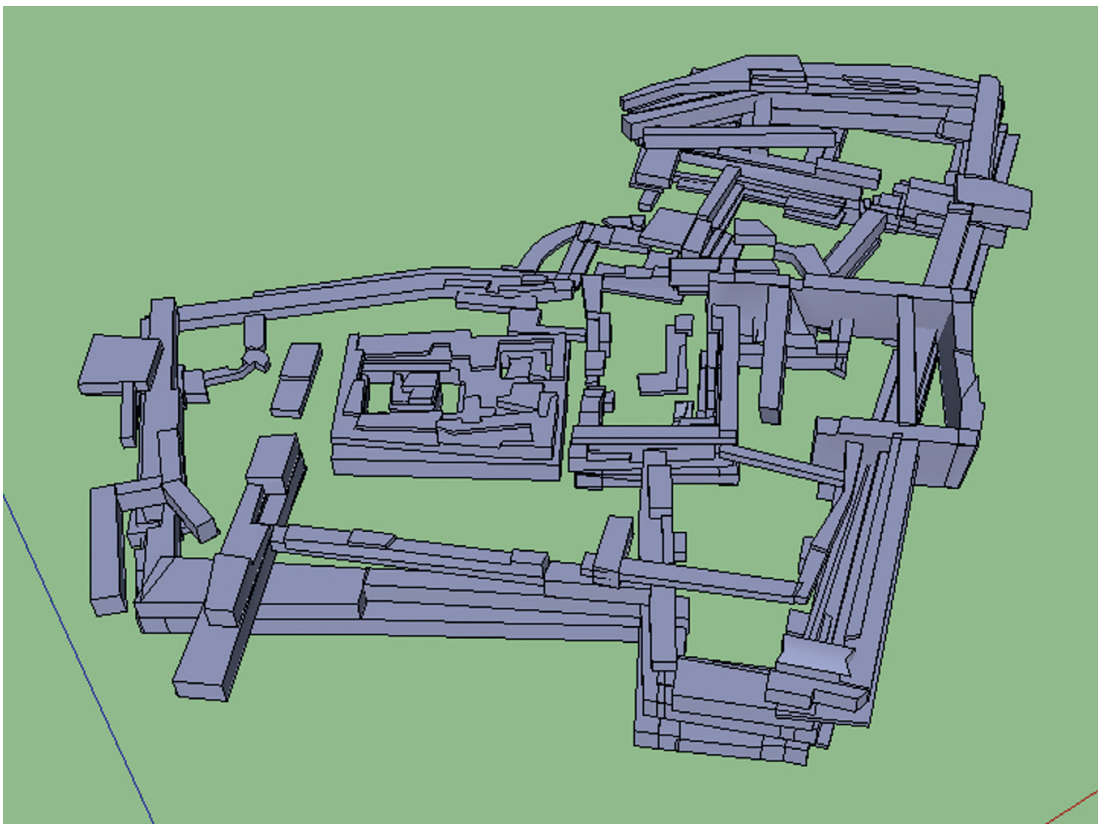


FIGURE 4.6 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated, from a southern perspective

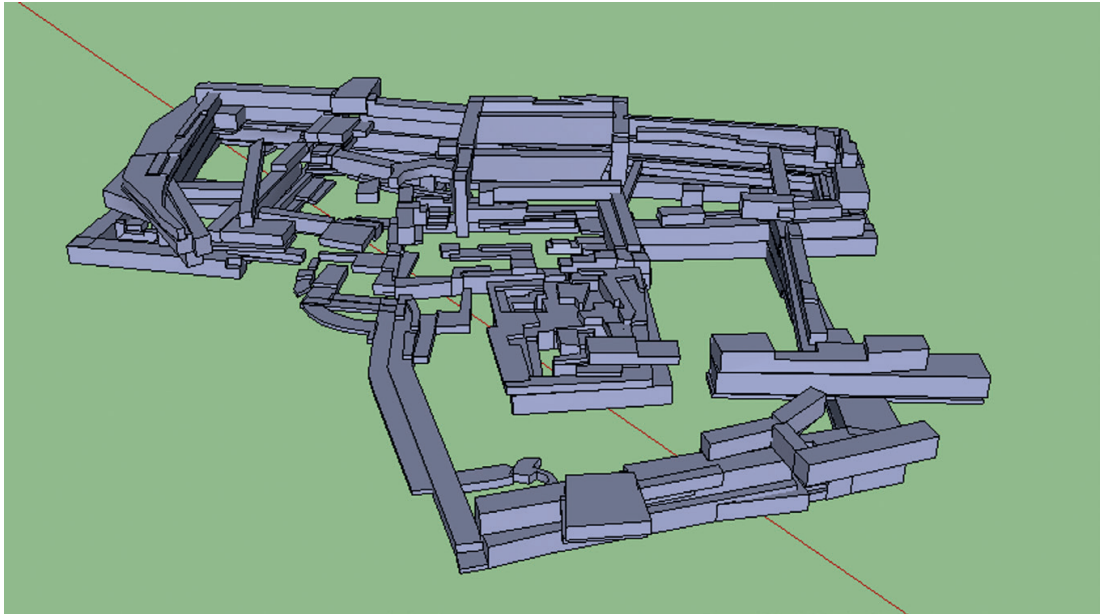


FIGURE 4.7 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated, from a western perspective

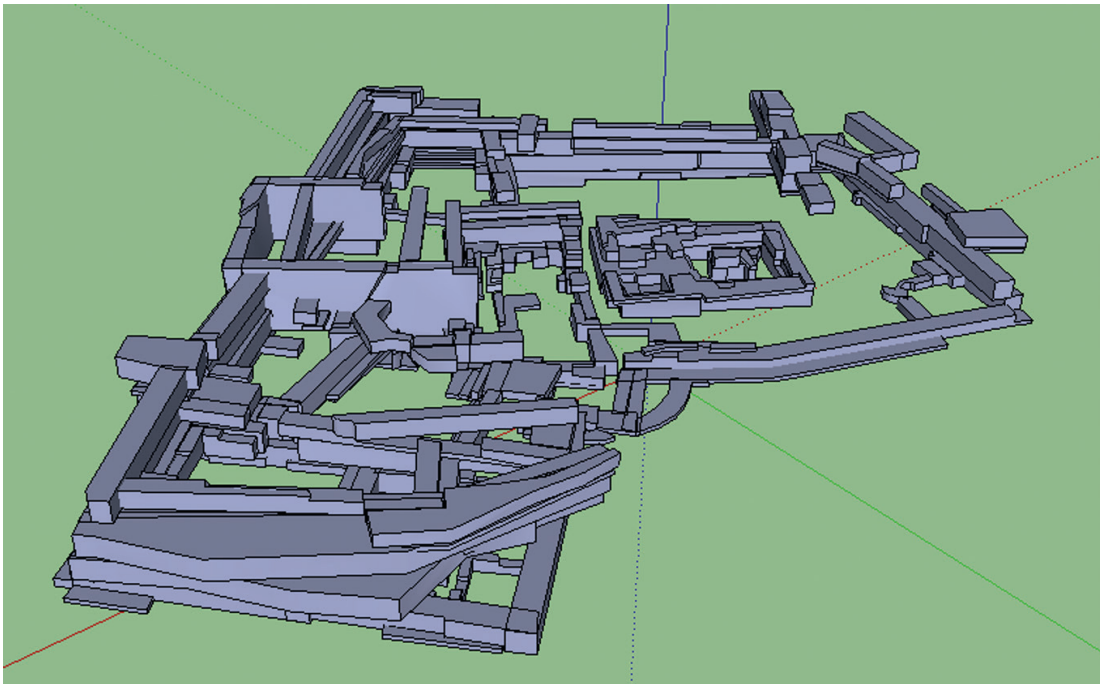


FIGURE 4.8 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated, from a northern perspective

with Finkbeiner's results and be used for more elaborate reconstructions (see below §4.4.4, §4.4.5). Various manipulations can be performed on these models. For instance, specific groups of walls can be highlighted (figs. 4.9–4.10) or vertical sections can be obtained in any direction and for any point in the building (fig. 4.11).



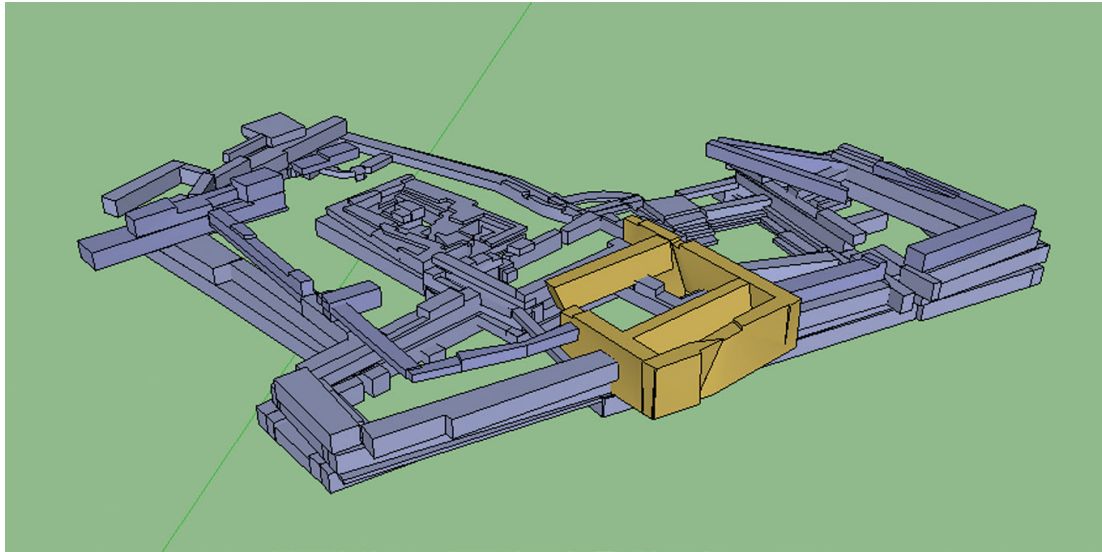


FIGURE 4.9 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated. The foundations of the Roman period Chapelle Orientale are highlighted in yellow

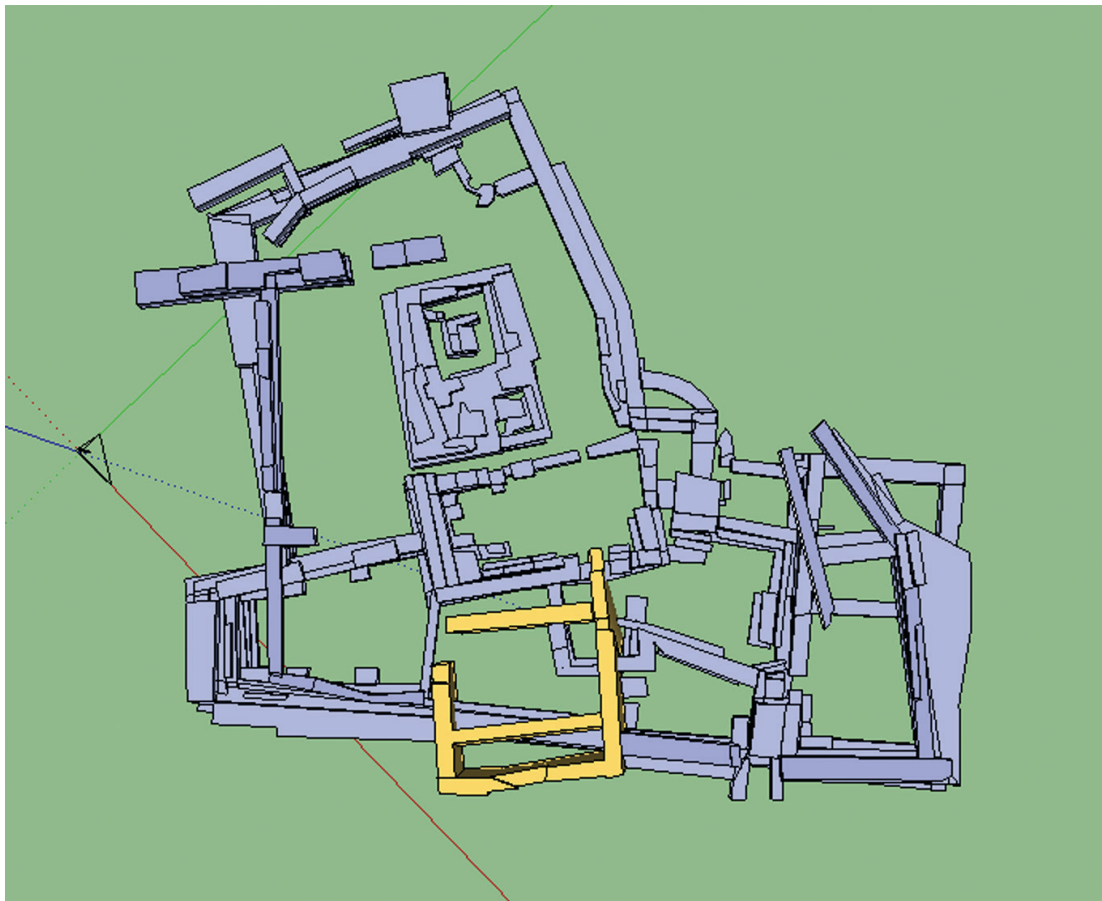


FIGURE 4.10 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated – bird's eye view. The foundations of the Roman period Chapelle Orientale are highlighted in yellow



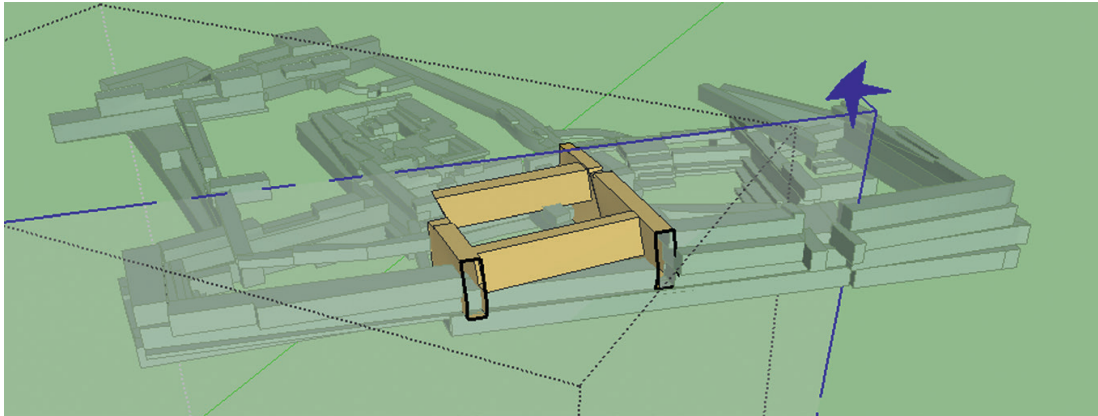


FIGURE 4.11 3D model of the architectural remains in the area of the Obelisk Temple as they appeared when excavated. The section of the foundations of the Roman period Chapelle Orientale is visible, highlighted in yellow. The blue lines and arrows appearing in the image belong to the “cutting tool” provided by the software to obtain sections of the model

#### 4.2 *Architectural Phases*

In general, my phases correspond well with Finkbeiner’s, and their comparison makes it possible to identify where his proposals are based on surviving architectural remains and where they are informed suggestions. Since this book focuses on the Late Bronze Age, only the architectural phases corresponding to the Obelisk Temple proper are discussed. Its predecessor building, the “Temple en L,” is not studied here because its remains are located below, and therefore predate, the destruction layer of the end of the Early Bronze Age. Likewise, the remains of the structures built after the Obelisk Temple, such as the Roman Chapelle Orientale, are excluded.

As observed by Finkbeiner, four distinct architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple can be recognised, his Phases IV, V, VI, and VII, which are my Phases 4–7 (figs. 4.12–4.18). These 3D reconstructions can be combined, as in fig. 4.19. Walls can be removed, and we can look at floors only as in fig. 4.20. These 3D projections can be combined with the stratigraphic approximation of the Late Bronze Age layers (see Appendix C), as it can be seen in fig. 4.21 and 4.22. Finally, these 3D projections can be further elaborated to obtain architectural models and plans of the specific phases, as explained in the following paragraphs.

### Phase 4

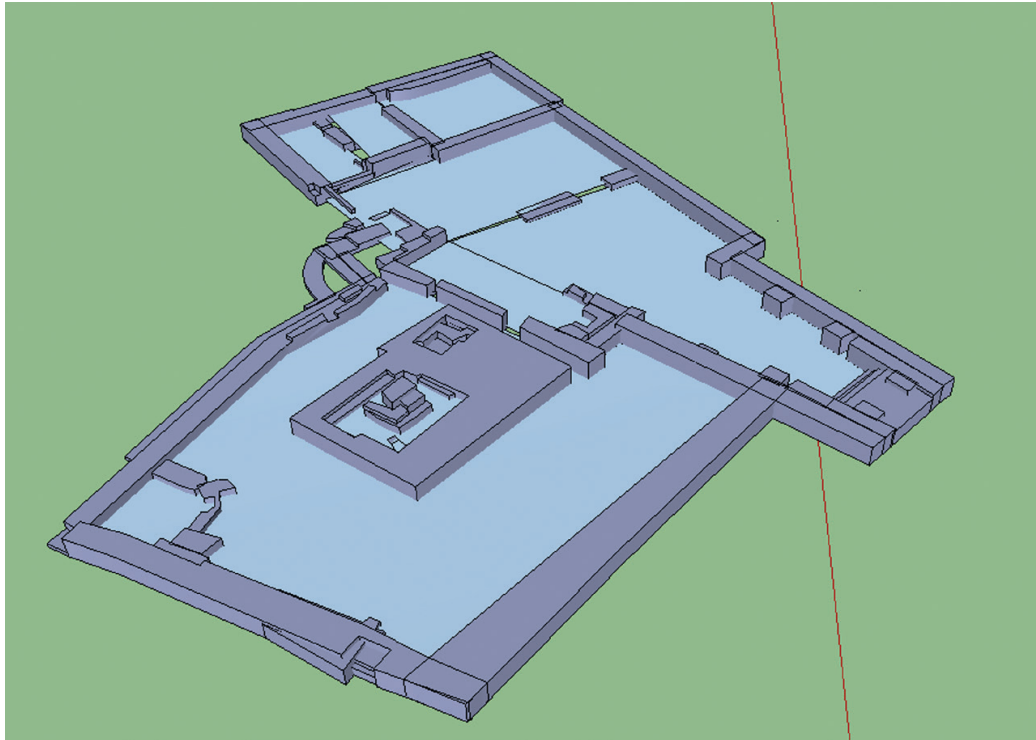


FIGURE 4.12 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – Phase 4 with walls and floors

### Phase 4–5

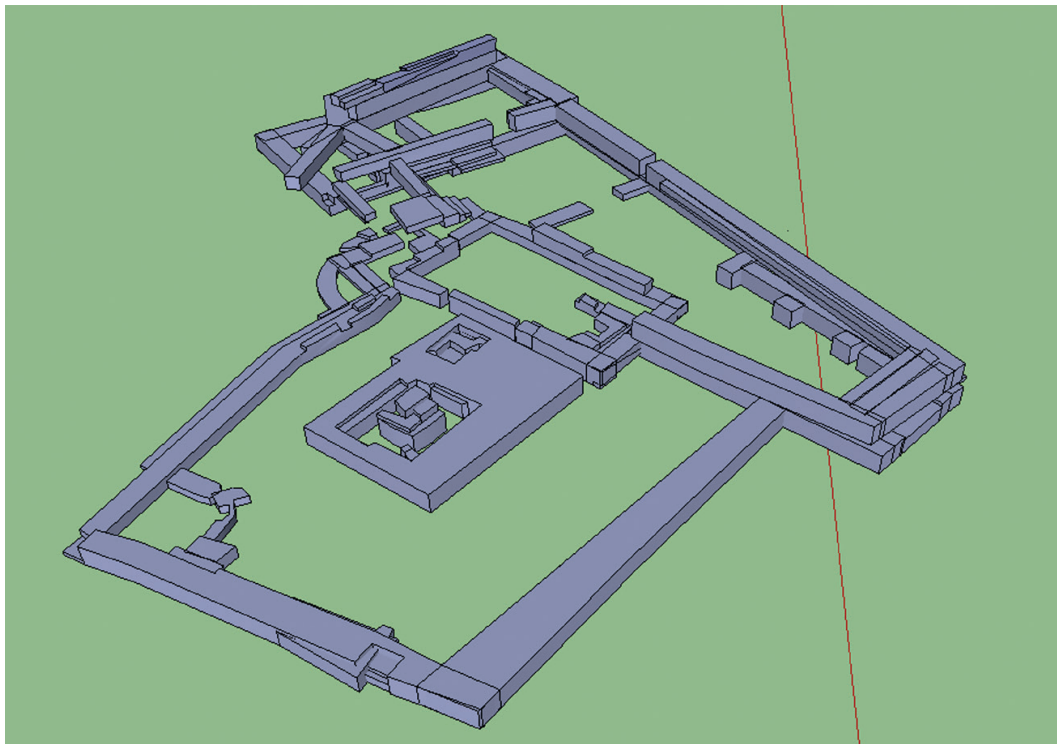


FIGURE 4.13 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – walls of phases 4 and 5 combined

## Phase 5

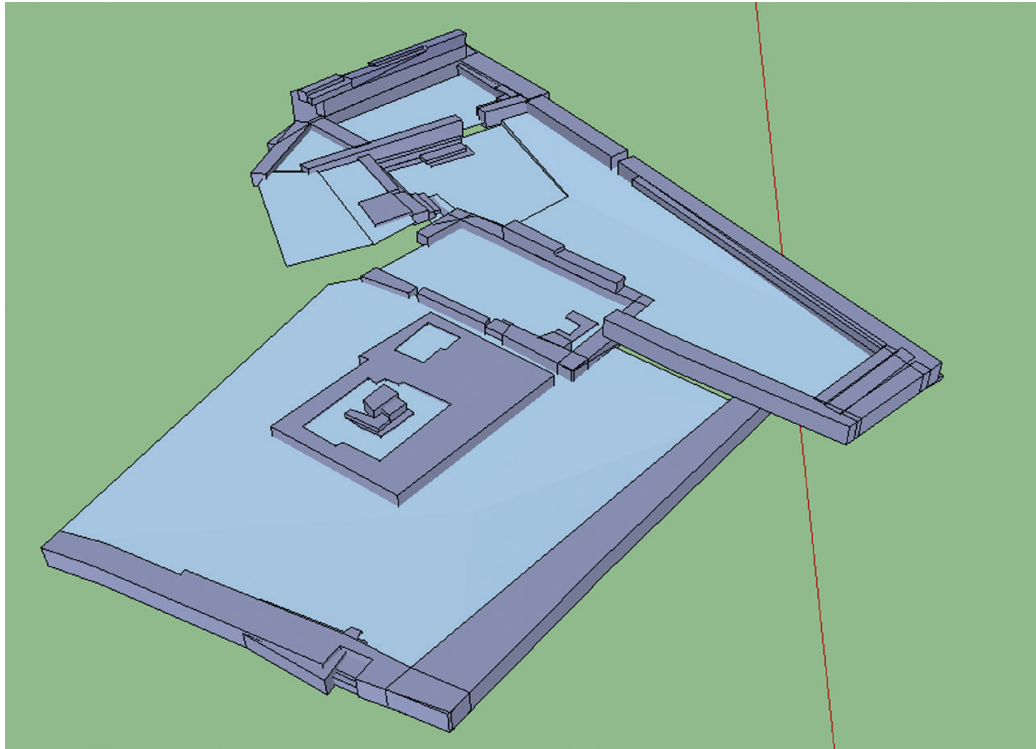


FIGURE 4.14 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – Phase 5 with walls and floors

## Phase 5–6

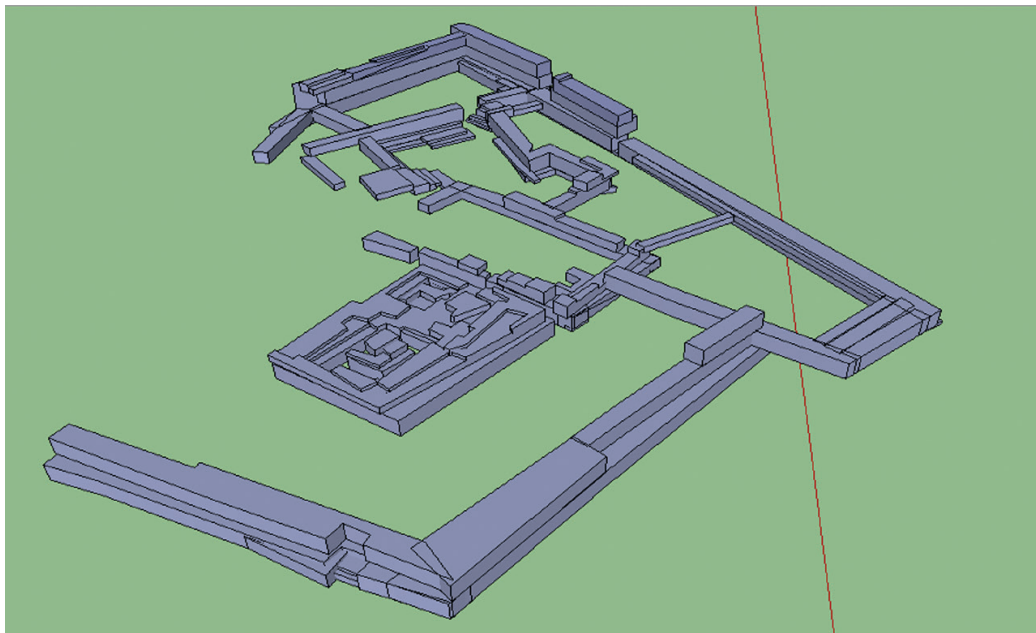


FIGURE 4.15 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – walls of phases 5 and 6 combined

## Phase 6

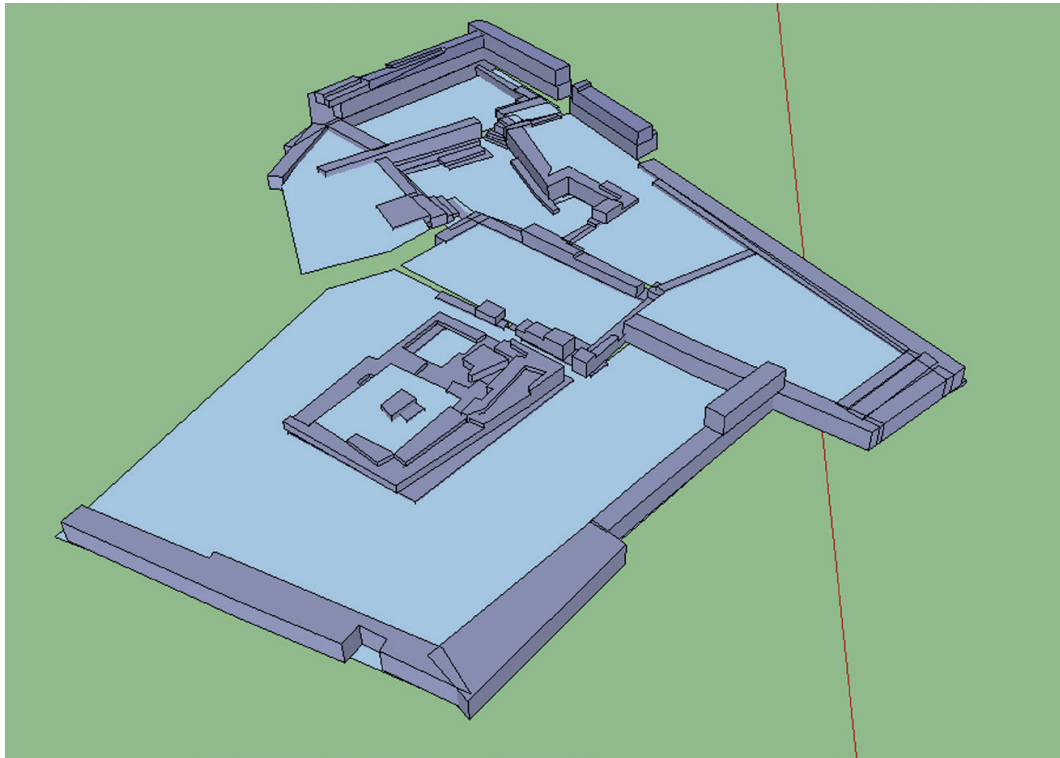


FIGURE 4.16 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – Phase 6 with walls and floors

## Phase 6–7

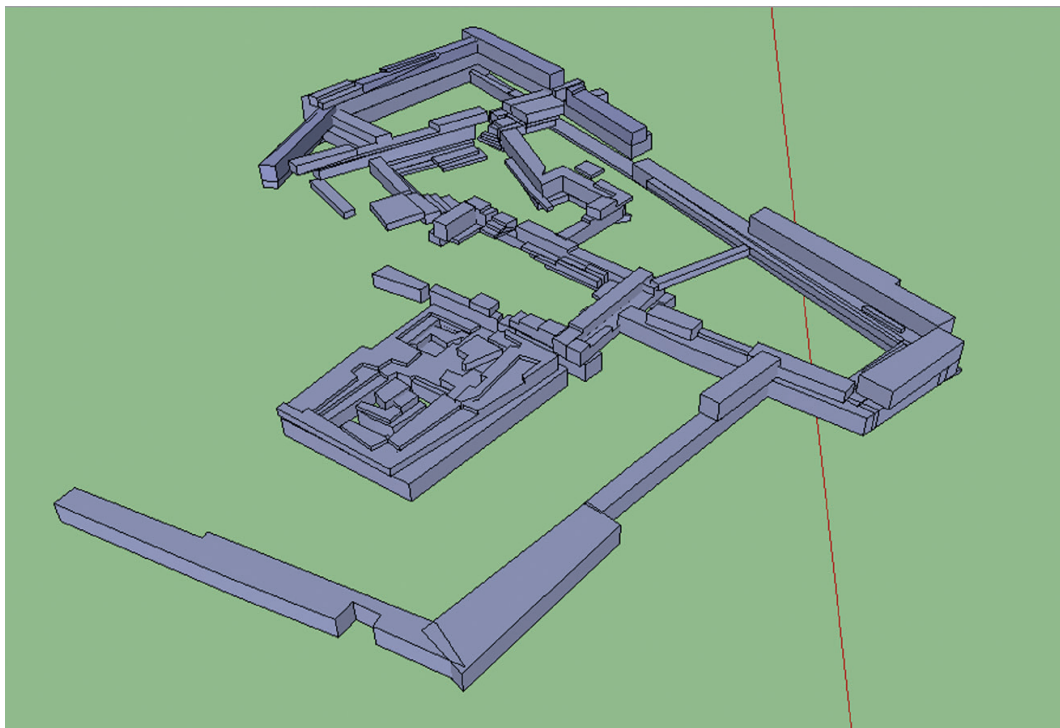


FIGURE 4.17 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – walls of Phases 6 and 7 combined



## Phase 7

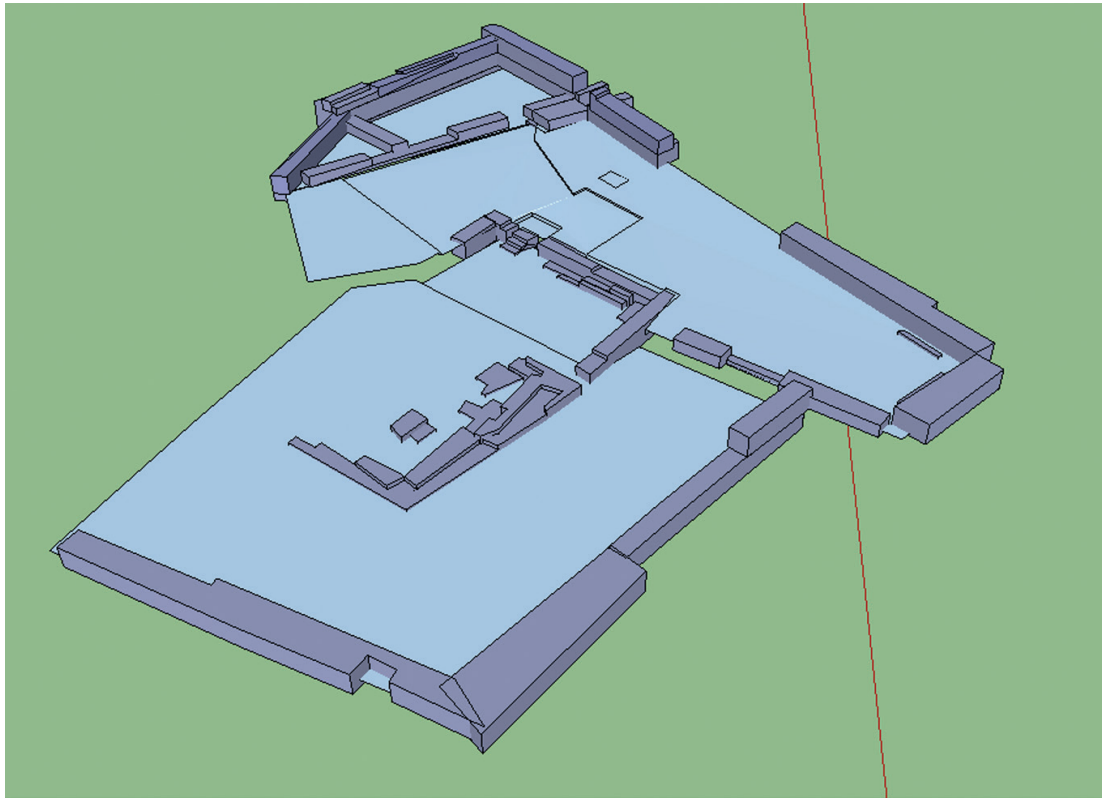


FIGURE 4.18 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – Phase 7 with walls and floors

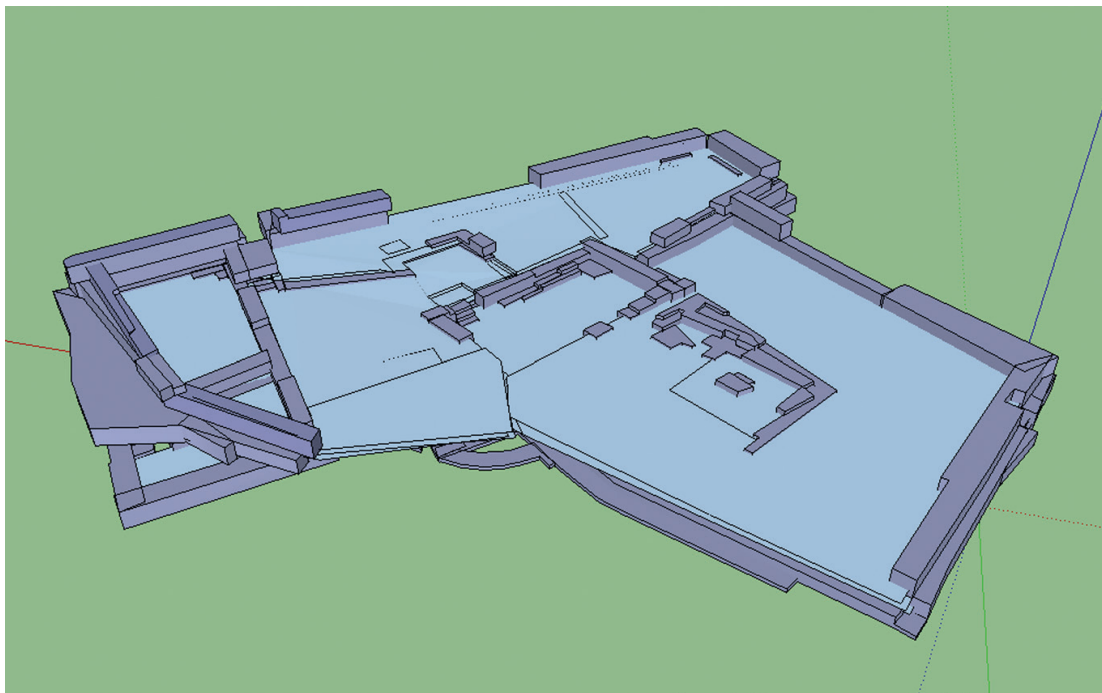


FIGURE 4.19 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple combining the walls and floors of Phases 4, 5, 6, and 7



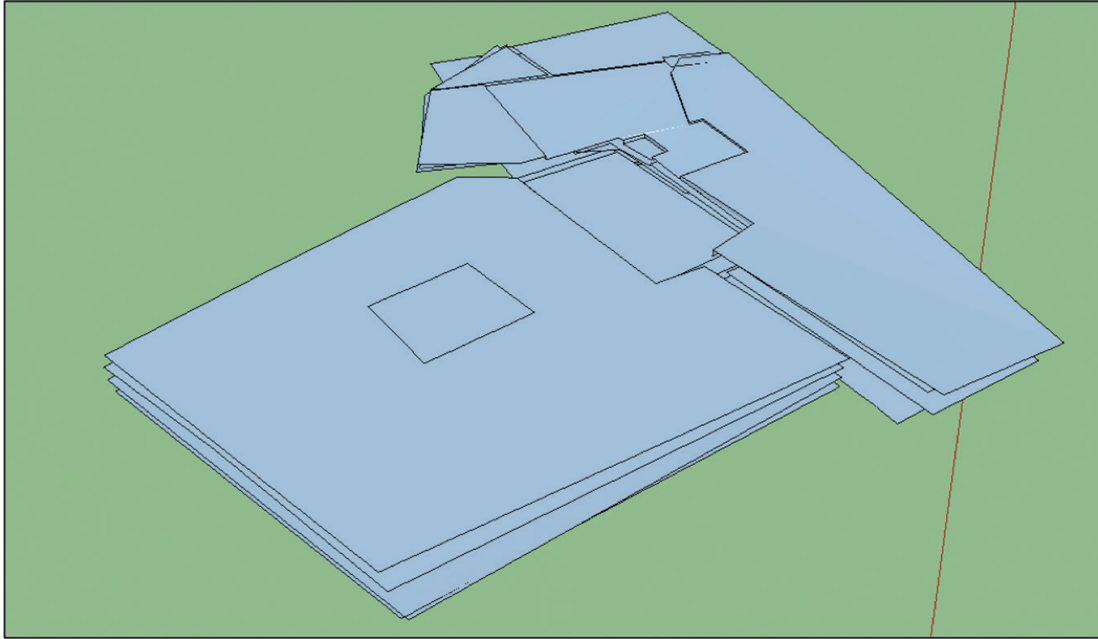


FIGURE 4.20 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple combining the floors of Phases 4, 5, 6, and 7

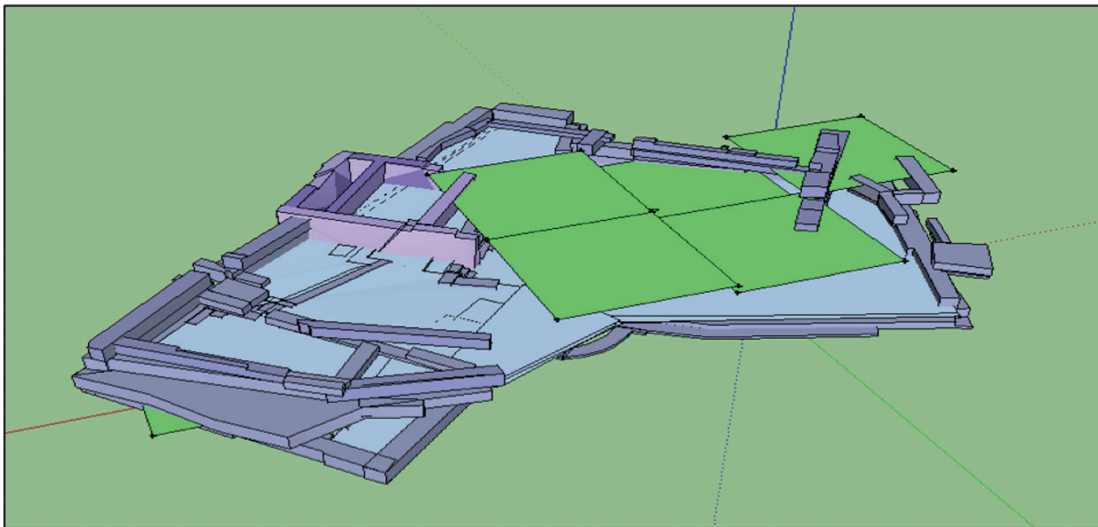


FIGURE 4.21 Projection of the *terminus sub quo* (green – see Appendix C) in combination with the 3D model of different architectural phases and from a north-western perspective

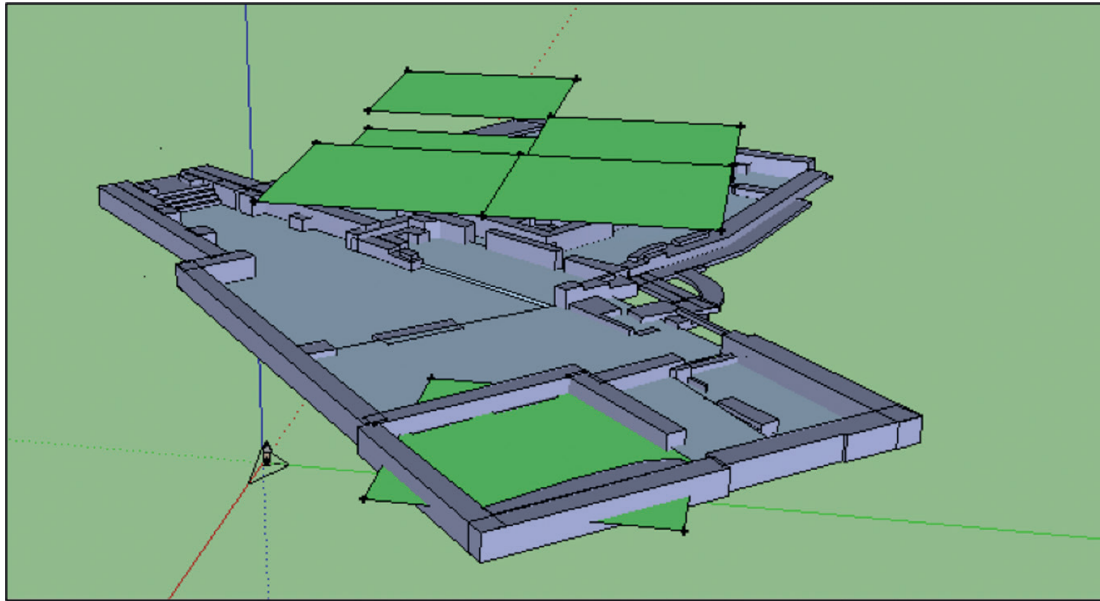


FIGURE 4.22 3D model of the architectural phases of the Obelisk Temple – Phase 7 with walls and floors

### 4.3 Late Bronze Material and Layers

A series of observations can be made starting from the combination of the stratigraphic approximations with the 3D models. First, the *sub quo* limit for the Late Bronze Age (see Appendix C) appears very coherent in the area of the Obelisk Temple, and in the majority of the squares it is located between levée 2 and levée 11.<sup>7</sup> The only exception is square 11/22, where the *sub quo* limit is much lower and corresponds to levée 18. On the basis of Dunand's records, it appears that a coin (no. 15581) was found in that Excavation Unit. In view of the coherence of the *sub quo* limit elsewhere in the temple, it is likely that we have here a contamination from upper, later layers. Dunand did not give the exact location of the coin and it is impossible to say how it ended up there, whether because of some major disturbance or because of some minor infiltration. As a consequence, the whole square has to be considered with caution, as it could have been stratigraphically disturbed.

Late Bronze Age objects have been found both below the level of the *terminus sub quo* and above it. The latter are clearly out of place. They, however, are worthy of attention, as they form a relatively coherent ensemble both spatially and typologically (see §4.4.6).

Scattered allusions indicate that Dunand had a clear and precise idea about the chronology of the structures he was excavating, but he did not publish any coherent chronological discussion, especially for these late periods. The

<sup>7</sup> In particular: levée 5, 11/19; levée 2, 11/20; levée 6, 12/18; levée 11, 12/19; levée 2, 12/20.

objects found below the *terminus sub quo* can help in filling this gap. The evidence is not much because, as already discussed, Dunand's records are not very informative about the dating of objects discovered. Nonetheless, although only a few chronological points of reference can be identified, the available evidence provides enough of a basis for offering some suggestions about the architectural development of the temple:

- A. The first dating clue is a fragment of a stone block bearing the name of Thutmose III (no. 13439; see §3.5 above). This was found near the southeastern corner of the courtyard (fig. 4.25) in levée 15 (elevation 25.20–25.00 m), that is, above the level of the floor of Phase 6 (elevation 24.90 m) and just below that of Phase 7 (elevation 25.30 m). The block was clearly recut for secondary use. Therefore no direct association between it and its context of discovery can be suggested. Nevertheless, it is a good *terminus post quem*: since no trace of disturbance is recognizable in the area where it was found, we can assume that the associated layers are either contemporary with the time of Thutmose III or later.
- B. Dunand found another fragment of a stele near the southern wall of the small chapel located at the east of the antechamber (Dunand's Annexed Chapel, 1954, 650; see figs. 4.25 and 4.30). This stele is mentioned in Dunand's catalogue (1954, 650), but it is not listed among the discovered items. Montet also discussed it briefly in a later publication (1964, 65–66). The text was very eroded, and only a few words could be translated – see below 4.4.4.

According to Dunand (1954, 650, n. 1), this stele dates to the Second Intermediate Period. Montet, instead, suggested dating it to the Old Kingdom. This would imply that it was completely out of context, since the layers where it was found are clearly above the remnants of the “Temple en L” and above the destruction layer from the end of the Early Bronze Age/Old Kingdom. Montet's date, however, is far from certain, being based solely on the observation that the name of Byblos is spelled *k-b-n*, rather than *k3p-n-y* (1964, 66). Although *k-b-n* was indeed the usual spelling during the Old Kingdom, its use is attested in Egypt until well into the Middle Kingdom (Horn 1963, 59–61). Nothing excludes it being used slightly later in Byblos. The stele could thus date to the (late?) Middle Bronze Age/late Middle Kingdom or to the Second Intermediate Period, as suggested by Dunand. In the future, examination of the original might identify further dating criteria.

- C. A deposit found near the southern wall of the courtyard gives another point of reference for dating. This deposit consists of a small jar

containing two bronze figurines (nos. 15883, 15884) and a scarab (no. 15885).<sup>8</sup> Dunand found it near the southern wall of the courtyard in levée 19 (elevation 24.40–24.20 m), above the floor level of Phase 4 (elevation 24.10 m) and approximately at floor level of Phase 5 (elevation ca. 24.40 m). The jar was intact when discovered, and the deposit does not seem to have been disturbed, which suggests that it was found in its original position. According to Dunand, one of the bronze statuettes (no. 15883) should be dated to the Second Intermediate Period or perhaps to the New Kingdom. According to Boschloos (2011, BYB 556), however, the scarab dates to the late Middle Bronze I–Middle Bronze II/Late Middle Kingdom and is contemporary with its context (she gives no reason for this interpretation). This deposit may thus date to the Late Middle Kingdom or to the early Second Intermediate Period.

- D. 1) Objects that according to Dunand could date to the late Middle Bronze Age (MB III)/Second Intermediate Period or to the Early Late Bronze (LB I–IIA)/Early New Kingdom have been found also in the Procella of the temple. In particular, a bronze blade (no. 13386) and five jugs (nos. 13387–13391) that Dunand dated to the Middle Bronze III or to the Late Bronze Age I–IIA were found under a bench near the northern wall of the Procella, in levée 15 (elevation 25.20–25.00 m). According to Dunand, they could be a deliberate deposit, perhaps commemorating the construction of the bench.

2) Figurine no. 14613 could also date to the Second Intermediate Period, according to Dunand. Its precise findspot is not specified, but its catalogue number makes it likely that it was found close to the deposit 14560–14607, near the south-eastern corner of the Procella, in levée 17 (elevation 24.80–24.60 m). On the basis of Dunand's plans, these levées appear to correspond to architectural Phases 6 and 7.<sup>9</sup>

- E. Finally, according to Dunand (1954, 651), the little chapel (the Annexed Chapel) discovered in the area at the south-east of the antechamber was built during the Middle Bronze III, which is equivalent to the Second

8 For a detailed discussion of bronze figurines in the Levant, including Byblos, see Seeden 1980; Negbi 1976.

9 The Procella does not seem to have undergone any significant architectural change between Phases 6 and 7.

Intermediate Period.<sup>10</sup> This chapel was added to the temple during the architectural Phase 6.<sup>11</sup>

A tentative absolute chronology can be suggested on the basis of this evidence. We can follow Dunand and suggest that Phase 6, characterised by the construction of the Annexed Chapel, dates to the Middle Bronze III/Second Intermediate Period (see E. above) and perhaps the early Late Bronze Age I–IIA/early New Kingdom (Eighteenth Dynasty). This would agree with the dating of objects found in the corresponding layers of the Procella, namely figurine no. 14613 (D.1. above) and possibly the deposit under the bench, nos. 13387–13391 (D.2. above), and it would support Dunand's dating for the stele found in the Annexed Chapel (B. above). Phases 4 and 5 could thus be dated to the Middle Bronze I–II/Middle Kingdom, as they precede Phase 6 but are later than the destruction of the "Temple en L," which probably took place in the late Early Bronze Age (EBIV)/end of the Old Kingdom – First Intermediate Period. This interpretation would agree with the Middle Bronze Age dating suggested by Boschloos for the small deposit (C. above) found approximately at the floor level of Phase 5. Finally, Phase 7 can be dated to the Late Bronze Age or later, as it follows Phase 6. It is however difficult to establish when the transition from Phase 6 to Phase 7 took place.

Two scenarios can be suggested for the position of the fragment of Thutmose III's stone block, which was found just below the supposed floor level of Phase 7. The first possibility is that Phase 6 corresponds to both the end of the late Middle Bronze Age (MBIII)/Second Intermediate Period and the early Late Bronze Age (LBI)/early New Kingdom, possibly around the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty, while Phase 7 would be later, and could date to the Late Bronze Age IIA–B/late Eighteenth Dynasty or to the Nineteenth Dynasty. In this case, the architectural structure to which the block with the name of Thutmose III originally belonged, if originally related to the Obelisk Temple, could pertain to Phase 6 and could have been destroyed during the building works of Phase 7. The second possibility is that Phase 6 corresponds to both the late Middle Bronze Age (MBIII)/Second Intermediate Period and the Late

10 Dunand actually wrote "première époque intermédiaire, c'est-à-dire du Bronze Moyen 3." It is clear from the context that this is a mistake, and that he intended Second Intermediate Period.

11 See Dunand's fig. 767 (1954), which combines two architectural phases. The western part, with the cella and the courtyard, corresponds to my Phase 5 (Finkbeiner's v), while the eastern part, with the antechamber, Annexed Chapel, and the nearby rooms, corresponds to my Phase 6 (Finkbeiner's vi). This fits with Dunand's statement that the Annexed Chapel was "encore plus tardive que le Temple aux obélisques dans l'état que nous venons de présenter" (Dunand 1954, 651).



Bronze Age (LBI–IIA/B)/Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, in which case Phase 7 would instead be much later, corresponding to the final part of the Late Bronze Age (LBIIB)/Nineteenth Dynasty or even to the beginning of the Iron Age/post Nineteenth Dynasty. Since Dunand seems to have dated Phase 6 to the late Middle Bronze Age III/late Second Intermediate Period rather than to the Late Bronze Age/New Kingdom (see E. above), since there is no mention of Iron Age material in clear association with these phases of the Obelisk Temple and the *terminus sub quo* based on Iron Age and later material is clearly above the level of Phase 7 (see figs. 4.21 and 4.22), and since construction activities are attested in the cultic area of the city under Ramses II (see §4.5 below), the former scenario is the most plausible.

The chronological sequence can thus be summarised as follows:

Phase 4: Middle Bronze Age I–II/Middle Kingdom

Phase 5: Middle Bronze Age I–II/Middle Kingdom

Phase 6: Middle Bronze Age III – Late Bronze Age I/Second Intermediate Period–Early New Kingdom (early Eighteenth Dynasty)

Phase 7: Late Bronze Age IIA–B/late New Kingdom (late Eighteenth Dynasty and later)

Phases 6 and 7 are therefore the most relevant ones for the present research; they are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

#### 4.4 *Phase 6*

On the basis of the 3D reconstruction of Dunand's excavation described above, it is possible to develop a 3D architectural model of Phase 6 (figs. 4.23 and 4.24). Relevant objects can be plotted in this model, and a plan can be obtained from it (fig. 4.25).

The temple presents an original architectural design which differs from contemporary temples in Syria and the southern Levant (Sala 2015, 47). The south-western part of the Obelisk Temple is the most characteristic and most innovative in comparison with the Early Bronze Age “Temple en L” that preceded it, but it remains constant later on. This area was the heart of the temple. The cella was located there at the centre of a broad courtyard encircled by a wall that defined it and separated it from the city and the outside world. The cella was a room of around 5 × 5 m. A pedestal made of stones was discovered at its centre (Dunand 1954, 644). It was probably the base of a monumental object – perhaps a baetylus or an altar – that was the focus of ritual practices. An ante-cella was located on the eastern side of the cella. The access was on the east, by way of a short staircase and a narrow passage through the ante-cella.

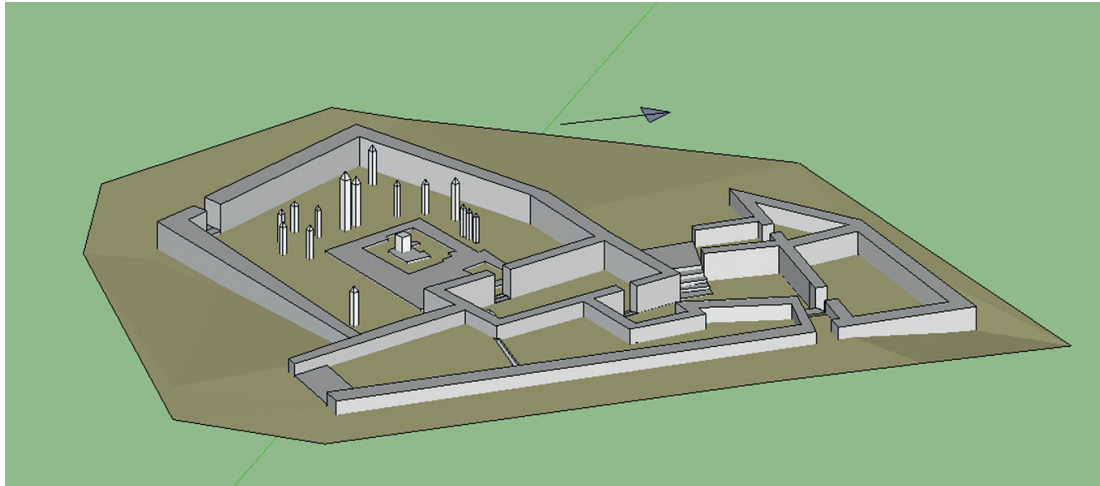


FIGURE 4.23 Phase 6 – Tridimensional reconstruction. The elevation of the obelisks is approximate

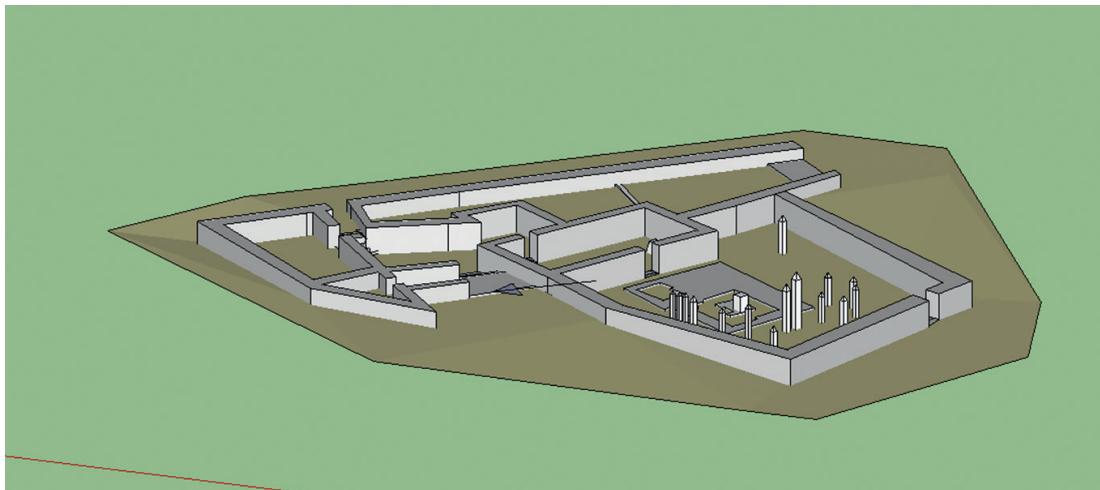
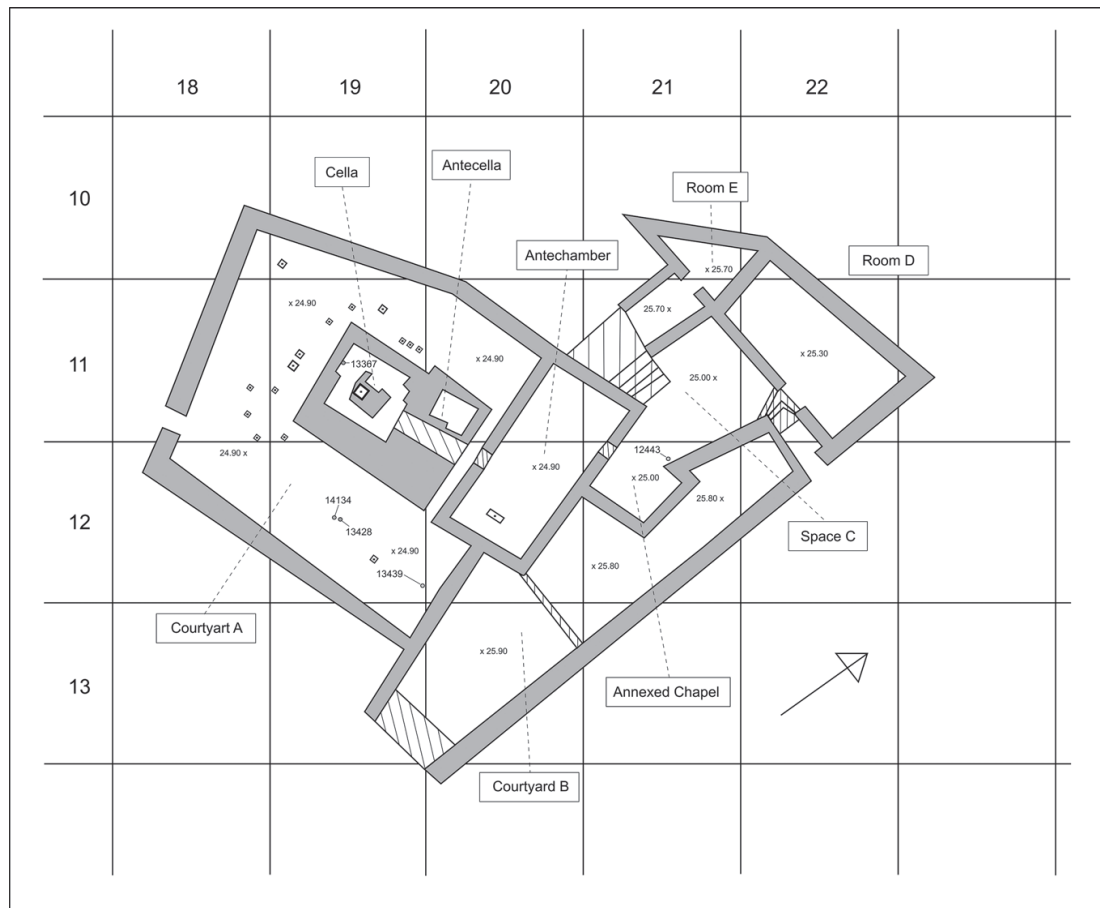


FIGURE 4.24 Phase 6 – Tridimensional reconstruction. The elevation of the obelisks is approximate

Various obelisks and standing stones were present in the courtyard, especially in its western part, behind the cella. The Egyptian inscription found on one of them and dedicated by the Byblian king Ibishemu<sup>12</sup> shows that at least some of these obelisks were offerings to the deity of the temple. The whole courtyard was apparently used to collect and display offerings, as attested not only by the obelisks but also by the vessels, sherds, and various objects found scattered there.

12 *mry ḥry-šf ḥꜣty-ꜥ n kꜣpny jb(j)šmw whm ‘nh ḥtmw-nsu=f kwkwn sꜣ rwqq mꜣ-ḥrw* “Beloved of Heryshef, the count of Byblos Ibishemu, repeating life, his royal sealer Kukun son of Ruqeq, justified” Montet 1962, 96 – see below.



**FIGURE 4.25** Obelisk Temple, Phase 6 – Plan. Hatched areas indicate thresholds, stairs, and other architecturally marked access points, while the dotted squares represent obelisks. Only the main obelisks are indicated (Dunand mentioned at least twenty-six obelisks or fragments of obelisks – Dunand 1954, 646)

The eastern part of the temple is characterised by a certain architectural continuity with the Early Bronze Age “Temple en L,” although individual rooms and spaces were modified and reorganised during the Middle Bronze Age. Access to the court was through an antechamber, located just in front of the access of the cella. On the south side of the antechamber Dunand found a stele in situ. Its surface was eroded and nothing remains of its decorations or inscriptions. On the north there was a stone base and a stone disc, the functions of which are not clear (Dunand 1954, 649).

To the east of the antechamber there was an elongated room or courtyard (Courtyard B in fig. 4.25) that may or may not have been roofed. A similar area was already present in the “Temple en L.” During Phase 6 a new architectural element, which Dunand termed as the “Annexed Chapel” (Dunand 1954, 649–51) was built within Courtyard B, in front of the access to the antechamber (fig. 4.25). Since only foundations remain, it is not possible to say if this structure

isolated the antechamber from Courtyard B or if a passage was present. This area of the temple is difficult to reconstruct, as it was affected by the construction of the foundations of the Roman Chapelle Orientale, which were as deep as Phase 6 (see fig. 4.11 above). At the north of the Annexed Chapel was a small intermediary space (Space C in fig. 4.25). From there, two stairways led to accesses connecting the temple with the outside world: the main one was on the west while a smaller one could be found on the east. Finally, to the north of this space were two rooms of unclear but most likely utilitarian function. During the Middle Bronze Age, one of these rooms (part of room D in fig. 4.25) was used as a metalworking shop for producing bronze figurines and other objects, possibly to be offered in the temple (Dunand 1954, 651). From Dunand's records, however, it is impossible to say if this room maintained the same function also in Phases 6 and 7.

Only a few objects worthy of notice were found in the layers corresponding to Phase 6; their findspots are indicated on Dunand's plans and in fig. 4.25.

– **No. Dunand II 12443 – Fragment of stele or architectural block**

- Findspot: Space C (fig. 4.25), just north of the Annexed Chapel – levée 12, 12/21.
- Description and notes: Fragment of stele or architectural block made of sandstone and bearing traces of an Egyptian relief depicting two offering tables. According to Dunand, it had been cut down to the size of a building stone ( $42 \times 28 \times 26$  cm). Dunand published only a drawing (see fig. 4.26), so that it is impossible to date it or say anything more specific. Since it was recut in antiquity, it might not have come from the Obelisk Temple, and its location could be secondary.

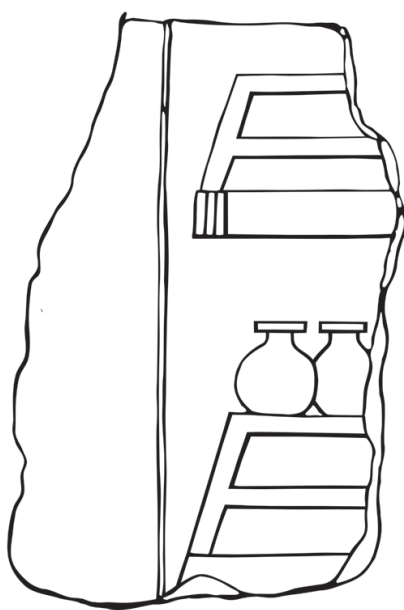


FIGURE 4.26

Fragment of stele or architectural block Dunand II 12443

DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR BASED ON DUNAND 1954, 524

– **No. Dunand II 13428 – Scarab**

- Findspot: levée 15, 12/19 (precise findspot not known).
- Description and notes: Uninscribed amethyst scarab, a photograph was published by Dunand (pl. cxxviii; here fig. 4.27). Boschloos (2011, BYB542) dates the scarab to the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasties. Dunand did not indicate a specific findspot, but square 12/19 includes part of the main courtyard of the temple. According to Boschloos (2011, BYB542, without quoting a source), the scarab was found outside the temple, in the street running along the southern wall of the courtyard. If she is right, this scarab may not be relevant here. If instead it was found in the courtyard, it could have been a temple offering deposited at the time of Phase 6, having circulated for a while after production and before deposition, or it could be out of context and could come from deeper, earlier layers.



FIGURE 4.27  
Scarab Dunand II 13428  
FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CXCVIII

– **No. Dunand II 13439 – Fragment of building block with Egyptian inscription**

- Findspot: south-eastern corner of the courtyard, south of the cella – levée 15, 12/20.
- Description and notes: Fragment (40.5 × 26.5 cm) of a limestone block bearing traces of the name of Thutmose III and of the *dj nh* formula. A picture was published in Dunand 1954, pl. clv (see further §3.5 above). As explained above, this fragment is probably out of context, but it can be used as a *terminus post quem* for dating this architectural phase.
- **No. ? – Fragment of a stele inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs**
  - Findspot: against the southern wall of the Annexed Chapel.
  - Description and notes: This limestone stele inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs is not listed in Dunand's catalogue, but it is mentioned in a section of it describing the Obelisk Temple (Dunand 1954, 650) and was preliminarily published by Montet (1964, 65–66), who gave its dimensions as 85 × 60 cm. For issues of dating, see above §4.4.3 B. The stele was found in situ in the Annexed Chapel, against its southern wall. Traces of the



inscription are visible only in its lower half, where a horizontal line precedes a series of vertical columns. The text was almost completely eroded at the time of the discovery, and Montet was able to read only the following words in the horizontal line:

...]jr mnww qd ḥw(t)=s (?) [...] ḥwt-ḥr nb(t) kbn[...

...] making monuments, build her temple (?) [...] Hathor Lady of Byblos [...]

The stele seems to record the dedication of a building. Its material suggests it was probably made in the city, not imported from Egypt. The mention of the Lady of Byblos and possibly of “her temple” raises questions about the relation between the Obelisk Temple and the Temple of the Lady (see below §4.34, §4.6).

In addition to these objects, a fragment of a stone vessel (no. 14134) was found in square 12/19, in levée 16 (height 9.3 cm, not illustrated). According to Dunand’s description in his catalogue, it was from a diorite vessel, in the shape of a truncated cone with a flat bottom and a large horizontal lip. Its exact findspot is not known. Such vessels and their contents were luxury objects, and they were probably offered in the temple.

Various other objects were found in the area of the temple in the levées corresponding to Phase 6, including bronze weapons, beads, brooches, human and animal figurines, and pottery. However, nothing specific can however be said about them, because their findspots are not known; usually only their square and levée are indicated in the publication, and their descriptions in Dunand’s catalogue are not precise enough to be useful. It is clear nonetheless that the majority of these objects were offerings and property of the temple, and they attest the importance of the Obelisk Temple in the life of the city.

#### 4.5 Phase 7

A 3D architectural model and a plan can be obtained also for Phase 7, they are shown in figs. 4.28, 4.29 and 4.30. The architectural layout of Phase 7 is similar to that of Phase 6. Besides the general rise of the level of the floors, the only remarkable change was in the antechamber, which according to Dunand’s plan became slightly shorter. In addition, in the intermediary Space C the floor level rose to reach that of the street outside, rendering the access stairs unnecessary.

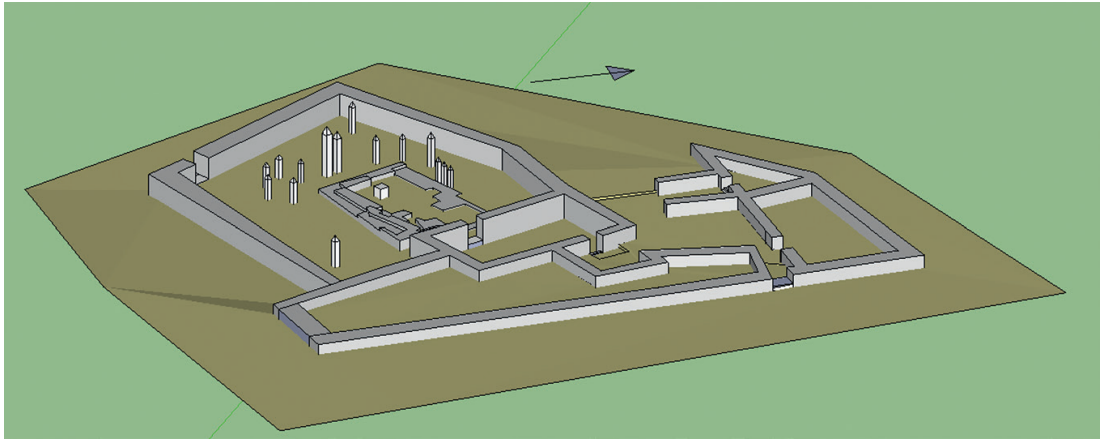


FIGURE 4.28 Phase 7 – Tridimensional reconstruction. The elevation of the obelisks is approximate

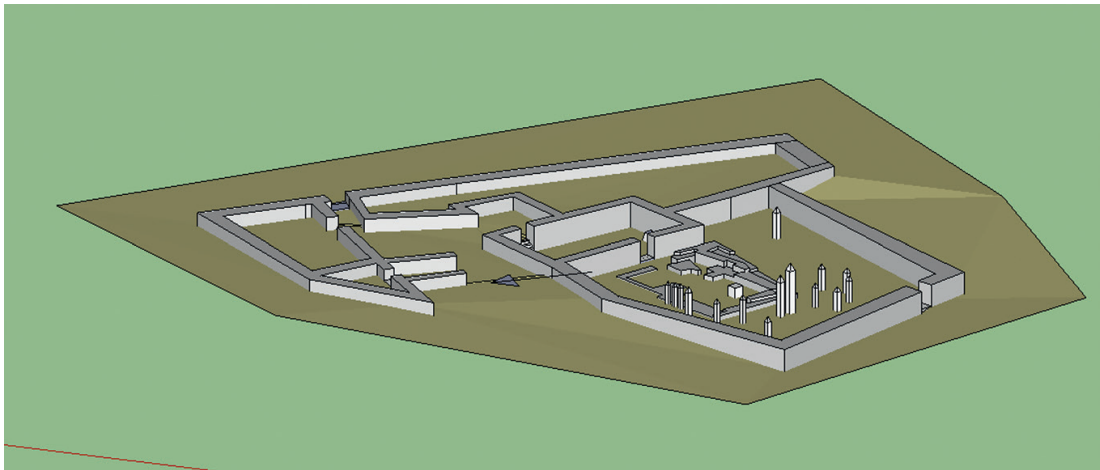


FIGURE 4.29 Phase 7 – Tridimensional reconstruction. The elevation of the obelisks is approximate

As for Phase 6, a few objects found in association with Phase 7 deserve attention:

- **No. Dunand II 11129 – Bronze figurine**
  - Findspot: southern part of the courtyard B – levée 9, 13/20.
  - Description and notes: Bronze standing male figurine, possibly representing a deity, and probably donated to the temple as an offering. Not identified by Seeden 1980. Height: 6.7 cm.
- **No. Dunand II 11130 – Bronze figurine**
  - Findspot: southern part of the courtyard B – levée 9, 13/20.
  - Description and notes: According to Dunand, male silhouette cut from bronze foil, while according to Seeden (1980, 90, D) it is a female figurine. If Dunand is right, another probable offering representing a male deity. (Dunand in pl. clxiii; see fig. 4.31). Height: 7 cm.

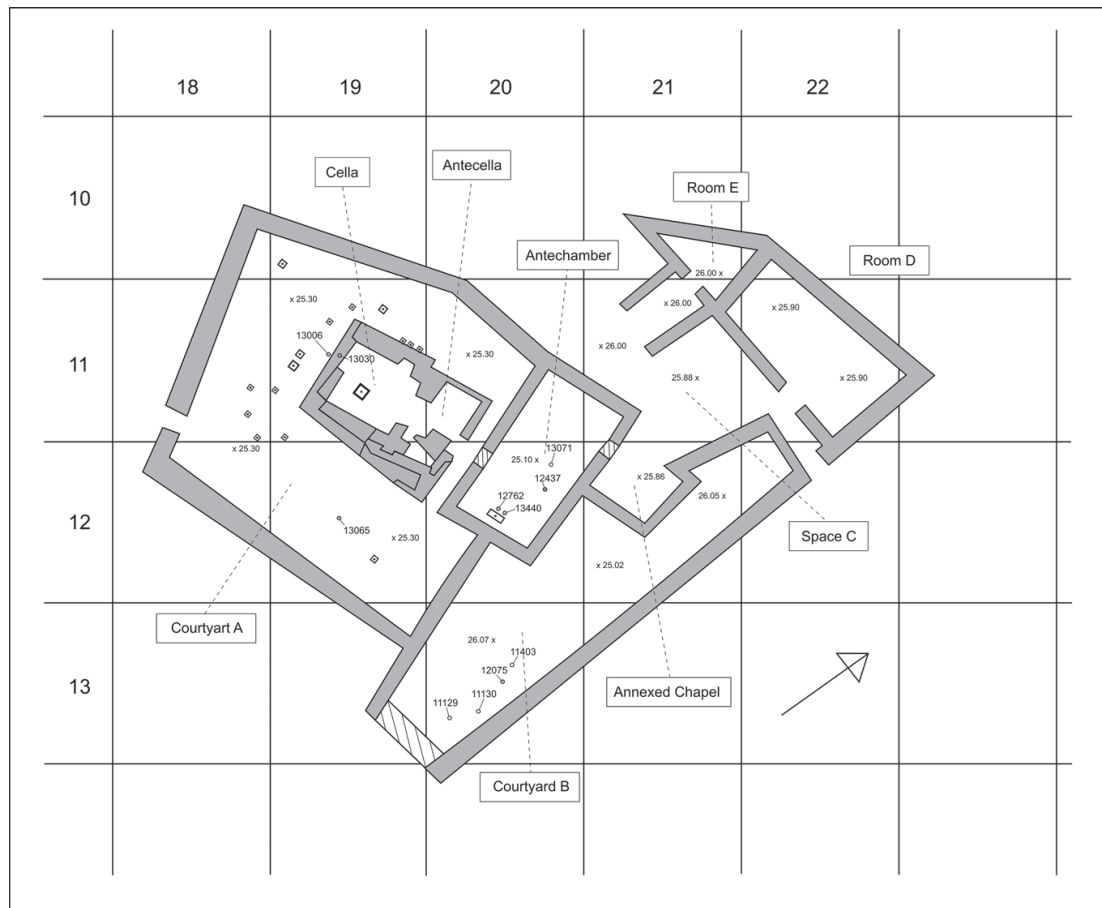


FIGURE 4.30 Obelisk Temple, Phase 7 – Plan. Hatched areas indicate thresholds, stairs, and other architecturally marked access points, while the dotted squares represent obelisks. Only the main obelisks are indicated (Dunand mentioned at least twenty-six obelisks or fragments of obelisks)  
FROM DUNAND 1954, 646

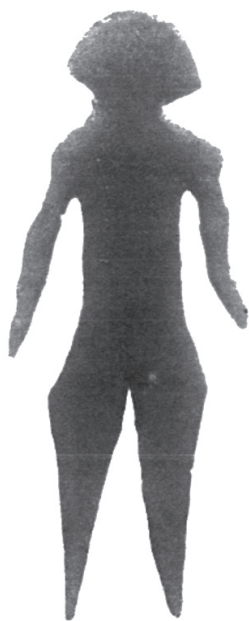


FIGURE 4.31  
Figurine Dunand II 11130  
FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CLXIII

- **No. Dunand II 11403 – Bronze figurine**
  - Findspot: southern part of the courtyard B – levée 10, 13/20.
  - Description and notes: On the basis of Dunand's description in his catalogue, figurine similar to 11129 above. Not identified in Seeden 1980. Height: 7.2 cm.
- **No. Dunand II 13071 – Bronze figurine**
  - Findspot: Antechamber – levée 14, 12/20.
  - Description and notes: On the basis of Dunand's description in his catalogue, figurine similar to 11129 above. Not identified in Seeden 1980. Height: 5.6 cm.
- **No. Dunand II 12437 – Egyptian statue**
  - Findspot: Antechamber – levée 12, 12/20.
  - Description and notes: Diorite statue of a man, lost below chest level (11 cm high; fig. 4.32; Dunand 1954, pl. clvii). Dated by Dunand to the Second Intermediate Period or to the New Kingdom.
- **No. Dunand II 13030 – Scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 14, 11/19.
  - Description and notes: Probably found in the courtyard of the Obelisk Temple (Dunand did not indicate a precise findspot). According to Boschloos (2011, BYB538), it is made of green jasper and dates to the late Middle Kingdom or later. As in the case of no. 13428, it could have circulated for some time before being deposited or could come from deeper layers.

As in the case of Phase 6, other objects were found scattered in the area of the Obelisk Temple in the levées associated with Phase 7. Among them were stone vessels (nos. 12075, 13065, 13006, 12762, 13440), weapons, jewels, figurines, and pottery, including the five jugs already mentioned (§4.4.3, D.1) and dated by



FIGURE 4.32  
Statue Dunand II 12437  
FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CLVII

Dunand in his catalogue to the Second Intermediate Period/late Middle Bronze Age or Early New Kingdom/early Late Bronze Age. The blade and bronze figurine discussed above with these vessels (4.4.3, D.1) are probably also associated either with Phase 6 or Phase 7. As for Phase 6, Dunand's records are too vague to allow a detailed study of these objects, which therefore can do no more than confirm the importance of the temple during this phase.

#### 4.6 *Late Bronze Age Objects out of Context*

Some Late Bronze Age objects were found above the *terminus sub quo*. Although these objects were out of place, their distribution is rather coherent and suggests a correlation between them and possibly a common origin. I refer to these objects as “Ensemble A” in the following paragraphs.

Dunand seems to have thought that, with a few exceptions, the objects found in this area<sup>13</sup> generally date to the Hyksos or Late Bronze periods but were out of context, having been brought to the surface by the excavation for the foundations of Roman buildings (Dunand 1954, 128–29, 272 n. 3). Dunand did not explain the reasons for such an interpretation, but a re-evaluation of the evidence can shed some light on this point, and can support his idea.

Horizontally, the objects of Ensemble A are scattered mainly in 5 squares (12/18; 11/19; 12/19; 11/20; 12/20), roughly corresponding to the area of the temple antechamber and the southern part of its courtyard. The wall of the courtyard of Finkbeiner's Phase VIII (1981) seems to mark the horizontal limit of this ensemble; no relevant object can be identified beyond it. Vertically, the situation is more complex. These objects are located above layers that contain post-Late Bronze material, but at the same time Middle Bronze Age scarabs are mixed with Late Bronze Age ones or found above them. It thus seems that we have a regular stratigraphy up to levées 7 or so, and then a confused, perhaps partially reversed one, in the squares containing Ensemble A. The easiest explanation for such a situation is that Ensemble A is the result of the secondary deposition of earth dug out from early layers. The Late Bronze Age material would have been dug out and discarded in this secondary position before the Middle Bronze Age material; this would explain the loose and in part possibly reversed stratigraphy. Such a disturbance would have occurred after the Iron Age and the Greek period, whose layers are shown to lie below Ensemble A by the position of the *terminus sub quo*, but possibly when the top of the wall of the courtyard was still visible. The earth containing Ensemble A could have

13 Dunand does not give the catalogue number of these objects, but it is reasonable to assume that he is referring to the objects of Ensemble A, as they are the only ones found in the area that would fit the description.



even been thrown there in order to fill a depression in the ground delimited by that wall and corresponding to the space formerly occupied by the Obelisk Temple's courtyard.

As for the original position of these objects, the volume of the earth containing Ensemble A can be roughly estimated to be at least 260 m<sup>3</sup>.<sup>14</sup> It is unlikely that such an amount would have been brought there from far away. The source must have been close, and deep enough to reach the Middle Bronze Age layers. These constraints fit very well with the excavation that must have taken place in Roman times to build the foundations of the Chapelle Orientale. As appears from fig. 4.11, those foundations are deep enough to reach and touch the floors of Phase 5, which can be dated to the Middle Bronze Age. All the later phases were thus affected by these Roman architectural works. Moreover, it appears that the foundations of such Roman walls were not just accommodated into narrow trenches. Rather, the whole space occupied by the foundations was fully excavated, as is demonstrated by the absence of remains of the eastern wall of the Obelisk Temple within the two foundation walls above levée 10 (see fig. 4.11, confirmed by Dunand 1954, 652). The volume of the earth removed for the construction of these foundation walls can thus be estimated as at least 360 m<sup>3</sup>. Part of it probably returned as fill for the excavated foundations. The rest must have been discarded somewhere, probably not far away. The area containing Ensemble A would have been very suitable, especially if it needed to be filled and levelled. It is thus very likely that these objects came originally from the Obelisk Temple, and at least some of them could have been stored in a jar or some other container that was broken during the Roman work, scattering them around.

Among the objects forming Ensemble A were New Kingdom scarabs, including a few bearing royal names. They are the following:

- **No. Dunand II 7761 – Egyptian scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 2, 12/19.
  - Description and notes: scarab made of white paste with the name of Thutmose III, *mn-hpr[-r]*. Not listed in Boschloos.
- **No. Dunand II 8127 – Egyptian scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 3, 11/20.
  - Description and notes: steatite scarab with the prenomen of Amenhotep II *ʕ-hprw-rʕ*. The standard formulae *nfr ntr*, *nb tʕwy*, and *dj nh dt* are

14 I.e., the volume corresponding to the Excavation Units in which Ensemble A is scattered, counting one levée for square 12/18 and 11/19, nine levées for 12/19, three levées for 11/20 and four levées for 12/20.

engraved around the name. According to Boschloos (2011, BYB445), this is an Egyptian import contemporary with the king's reign.

- **No. Dunand II 9393 – Egyptian scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 6, 12/19.
  - Description and notes: steatite scarab with the names and titles of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye, *ntr nfr nb-m3't-r' dj 'nh* and *hmt nsw tjt 'nhjt*. According to Boschloos (2011, BYB489), Egyptian import contemporary with the king's reign.
- **No. Dunand II 9896 – Egyptian scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 7, 12/19.
  - Description and notes: scarab made of a soft and powdery white paste with the name of Amenhotep III *nb-m3't-r'*. According to Boschloos (2011, BYB497), Egyptian import contemporary with the king's reign.
- **No. Dunand II 11053 – Egyptian scarab**
  - Findspot: levée 9, 12/19.
  - Description and notes: steatite scarab with the name of Amenhotep III, *nb-m3't-r'* and the words *w'b* "pure," *w3st* "Thebes," and a "s" sign (S29) around it that Boschloos (2011, BYB508) interprets as a royal epithet meaning "purifier of Thebes." According to Boschloos this scarab is an Egyptian import contemporary with the king's reign.

These scarabs all date to the mid Eighteenth Dynasty, and they could have been stored together. They could come from the Obelisk Temple and could represent an offering of some sort. More generally, they attest to continuing interactions with Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty. It is instead impossible to say if the Egyptians directly offered them to the temple, or if they ended up there in an indirect way, for instance passing through the royal palace first. The fact that some Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs were found also in Necropolis K (§4.7) and around the city (§3.3.1) shows that they were not items exclusively reserved to the temples.

#### 4.7 *Obelisk Temple – Discussion*

During the Late Bronze Age, the Obelisk Temple had a sacred area constituted by a cella within a walled courtyard. The courtyard with its obelisks was a privileged place for the deposition of offerings. Access to the court was through an antechamber that probably had some cultic function, since the socle of a stele or altar was found in it. Next to the antechamber was the Annexed Chapel, which was probably built during Phase 6. This chapel was characterised by a small stone bench and two offering tables, and contained a stele inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs possibly recording some act of piety or building activity in the temple. The eastern part of the Obelisk Temple complex was

probably more utilitarian, with a courtyard inherited from the earlier “Temple en L” and some rooms that probably had at least partially functional purposes. The objects found in the area of the temple attest its importance in the socio-economic landscape of the city, while the presence of deposits provides evidence of cultic practices involving offerings and ritual depositions. The presence of Egyptian objects raises questions about the role of this temple in the religious interactions of the city with Egypt. These aspects are explored in more detail in relation with the remains of a chapel bearing the name of Ramses II and in the following discussion (§4.54.6).

Since no written source refers to the Obelisk Temple, identifying the nature of its cult is difficult. Some hypotheses, however, can be suggested on the basis of the following observations:

1) One of the Middle Bronze Age obelisks found in the courtyard bears the following inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs:

*mry ḥry-šf ḥ3ty-‘ n k3pny jb(j)šmw whm ‘nh ḥtmw-nsw=f kwkwn s3 rwqq  
m3‘-hrw*

Beloved of Heryshef, the count of Byblos Ibishemu, repeating life, his royal sealer Kukun son of Ruqeq justified (Montet 1962, 96).

As said above, this inscription seems to suggest that the temple involved the cult of a male deity identified with the Egyptian Heryshef, whose local, native name is not known. Dunand identified Heryshef with the god Reshef, but this identification relies only on the vague assonance of their names. However, the Egyptian name means “He who is on His Lake” and has no relation at all with the Semitic Reshef, and to my knowledge there is no ancient source associating these two gods. Therefore, in this case I do not see any concrete evidence supporting Dunand’s suggestion. The numerous bronze male figurines found as offerings within the temple fit with the worship of a local male deity (Dunand 1954, *passim*; see also above).

2) The stele found in the Annexed Chapel and associated with Phase 6 (§4.4.4 above) suggests a connection of the temple with the Lady of Byblos. It is unlikely that the Obelisk Temple was the primary temple of the goddess, which was elsewhere in the city (see §4.3). Moreover, objects referring to the Lady or to her temple existed in other religious buildings in the city, such as the stele of the Phoenician king Yehaw-milk, found in front of the later so-called Egyptian Temple (Dunand 1941, see §4.1). Since it is unlikely that multiple temples were dedicated to the goddess, it is plausible that the Obelisk Temple was dedicated to a male deity who was connected with the Lady of Byblos and her temple.

A hint to the possible nature of such a connection can perhaps be found in Lucian of Samosata's *De Dea Syria*. The text, which dates to the second century CE, describes aspects of the Syro-Phoenician religious world, focusing on the temple of the goddess Atargatis in the city of Hierapolis Bambyce, in the area of Aleppo. In particular, in chapter 28, Lucian says (Lightfoot 2003, 267):

The place itself where the temple is situated is a hill; it lies right in the centre of the city, and two walls surround it. Of the walls one is old, the other not much earlier than our own times. The propylaea of the temple face the north, their height about a hundred fathoms. It is within these propylaea that the phalli stand which Dionysus erected, themselves three hundred fathoms tall. One of these two phalli is climbed twice a year by a man who lives on top of the phallus for the span of seven days. The reason for his ascent is supposed to be this. Most people think he converses with the gods up there and asks blessings for the whole of Syria, and they hear his prayers from near at hand. Others think this is done for Deucalion's sake, in memory of the calamity when mankind climbed into the mountains and the tallest trees for fear of the flood-water. To me this also seems unconvincing. I think that it, too, is done in honour of Dionysus, and I infer it from the following. All those who erect phalli for Dionysus set wooden figurines on these phalli, for what reason I shall not say. But I think the man ascends in counterfeit of that other wooden man.

This description presents some significant similarities with the situation in Byblos: there is a main temple dedicated to a goddess, namely a form of Astarte as in Byblos, as well as a sacred area with some pillars (likely standing stones, or obelisks of some sort) associated or dedicated to a male deity interpreted as Dionysus. There are offerings of "wooden men" in the area of the pillars, which recall the many bronze figurines found in the Obelisk Temple in Byblos.<sup>15</sup> It has even been suggested that the rectangular recesses present on some of the obelisks in Byblos could have been used as niches for small cult statues, which would thus have been put on the stones as the "wooden men" described by Lucian (Seeden 1980, *passim*; pl. 133; Sala 2015, 47). It cannot be excluded that

<sup>15</sup> At least one bronze figurine was present also in the temple described by Lucian, who says: "This too is found in the temple: on the right of the sanctuary sits a little bronze man with a large organ" (chapter 16: Lightfoot 2003, 257). The similarity is not only in the metal: many of the male figurines found in Byblos have clearly marked genitals (Dunand 1954, *passim*).

there were wooden offerings in Byblos's Obelisk Temple as well. Wood, however, would have not survived.

While it would be wrong to establish any direct link or to interpret what we observe in Late Bronze Age Byblos on the basis of a Graeco-Roman text describing a temple in Syria in the second century CE, this passage shows that main temples could have a connection with secondary shrines or cultic spaces associated with other deities. Such a scenario is attested for Byblos itself in the same *De Dea Syria*, where Lucian states that in Roman times the mysteries of the male hero/god Adonis were celebrated in the Temple of the Lady of Byblos (*De Dea Syria* 6; Lightfoot 2003, 251).

It is thus possible that the Obelisk Temple was the temple of the main male deity of the city, who was associated with the Lady of Byblos not only on a theological level but also in the practices of the cult.

## 5 The Chapel of Ramses II

During the campaigns of 1926–1932 Dunand discovered a number of limestone blocks of a chapel or shrine bearing reliefs and inscriptions with the name of Ramses II. These blocks were not in primary position, but were partly scattered in the Byzantine layers and partly reused in a later stone pavement near the Egyptian Temple, which Dunand (1939, 71–72; 1982, 198) dated to the Persian period or later.

The blocks are the following, dimensions are given as height × width/length × depth:

### – No. Dunand I 1315

- Findspot: Byzantine Level, first îlot, 4 meters forwards of the statues of the Egyptian Temple.
- Dimensions: not known
- Description: Fragment with traces of the name of Ramses II.
- Inscriptions:

↓←(⊙↑⊙⊙⊙)|

(*wsr-m3't-r'-stpn-r'*)

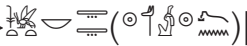
### – No. Dunand I 1317

- Findspot: Byzantine Level, first îlot, last three rooms bottom right of pl. ccvi (Dunand 1939).
- Dimensions: 186 cm × 55 cm × 67 cm
- Description: left doorjamb, possibly from a small door. On the front is a figure of the king, standing facing right, towards the door opening, and



offering a pointed loaf. Above him is his *nsw-bjty* name. The image of the king appears remarkably small compared to the text. According to Dunand, another man, with a shaved head and a long dress, probably a priest, is represented presenting an offering on the lateral face of the doorjamb (Dunand 1939, pl. xxvii; fig. 4.34).

– Inscriptions:

↓→|

*nsw-bjty nb t3wy (wsr-m3't-r'-stp~n-r')*

– **No. Dunand I 1318**

– Findspot: Byzantine Level, first ilôt, last three rooms bottom right of pl. ccvi.

– Dimensions: not known

– Description: right doorjamb corresponding to the previous one. According to Dunand it bears the same images, but the head of the king and the inscription are missing. No image seems to be available, although Dunand referred (wrongly?) to the photograph of pl. xxvii (Dunand 1939). However, it does not seem that any of the blocks represented in that photograph (reproduced in fig. 4.34) matches with Dunand's description.

– **No. Dunand I 1319**

– Findspot: Byzantine Level, first ilôt, last three rooms bottom right of pl. ccvi.

– Dimensions: 75 cm × 137 cm × 35 cm

– Description: limestone beam with large rebate.

– **No. Dunand I 1320a + 1320b**

– Findspot: Byzantine Level, first ilôt.

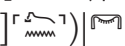
– Dimensions: height 72 cm × depth 23 cm + height 65 cm × depth 33 cm, width/length not known.

– Description: two fragments with cartouches of Ramses II and traces of two *mry x* – beloved of x" formula. Possibly part of a lintel. Found next to the previous blocks (Dunand 1939, pl. xxvii; fig. 4.34).

– Inscriptions: vertical columns

↓→...]

↓→...(])|

↓←...(])|

↓←...]

...]-N25 *mry*

... (r') 'msj sw' [mrj jmn])| nbw

... (wsr-m3't-r')-stp n'-[r']| nbw

...] mr'y'

- **No. Dunand I 1354**
  - Findspot: levée 1, sector 18
  - Dimensions: 135 cm × 45 cm × 43 cm
  - Description: fragment of a similar doorjamb with cartouche of Ramses II.
  - Inscriptions:
 

↓ ←  (...  
*nsw-bjty nb t3wy (wsr-m3't-r<sup>c</sup>-stpn-r<sup>c</sup>) s3 r<sup>c</sup>*
- **No. Dunand I 1355a + 1355b**
  - Findspot: levée 1, sector 18.
  - Dimensions: 59 cm × 33 cm × 35 cm + 33 cm × 71 cm × 29 cm
  - Description: two fragments of a doorjamb with cartouche of Ramses II similar to that of Dunand I 1354.
  - Inscriptions: no image.
- **No. Dunand II 7226**
  - Findspot: Levée 1, 16/18.
  - Dimensions: height 205 cm, width/length and depth not known.
  - Description: Fragment of a block with two decorated faces. On one of them are parts of a figure of a man holding a sceptre. On the other, there are traces of a man in veneration. Dunand related it to the previous blocks. Published in Dunand 1954, pl. clv – see also fig. 4.33.

Dunand (1939, 54) was sure that the three blocks (1317–19) came from the same building, and that the same was likely for the other blocks too. The presence of doorjambs and a lintel led him to reconstruct a small door, possibly belonging to a chapel (see also Dunand 1939, pl. xxvii). As he pointed out (1939, 433), the blocks with uraei that are mounted above the lintel come from a different



FIGURE 4.33  
 Block Dunand I 7226  
 FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. CLV



FIGURE 4.34 Reconstruction of the Chapel of Ramses II using blocks 1317, 1318, 1320a, 1320b, formerly in the National Museum of Beirut  
FROM DUNAND 1954, PL. XXVII

area of the site and could be unrelated. This reconstruction, formerly in the National Museum in Beirut, is no longer on display.

The only inscriptions on these blocks were the name of the king and conventional offering formulae, while the Egyptian-style reliefs consist essentially of symmetrical images of the king followed by priests (Dunand 1939, 54–55).

As Dunand observed (1939, 54), this is a small chapel or shrine commissioned by Ramses II. The building was dismantled before or during the Persian period, when some of its blocks were reused.

On the basis of the forms of the names of Ramses II attested on the various blocks, the construction of this temple can be dated after year 21 of his reign. In particular, the combination of the *nsw-bjty* name *wsr-mꜣt-rꜥ-stp-n-rꜥ* with the Birth Name *rꜥ-msj-sw-mrj-jmn* attested on some of the blocks above is common only after this date and is attested occasionally only after year 18 (Obsomer 2012, 66–67). The Chapel was thus built after Ramses II's Syrian campaigns, and probably also after the ratification of the Peace Treaty with the Hittites in year 21. The presence of such a building in Byblos, together with other evidence (see §3.5, §4.8 and §5.6), confirms that Ramses II was active in the city. Moreover, the late dating suggests that the attention given by the Egyptians was not solely concomitant with the Egyptian military activities in the region at the beginning of Ramses II's reign, but continued also in later years.

Since only fragments in secondary position were found, the original location of this chapel and its relation with the other temples of the city are unknown. Dunand suggested a possible connection with the Obelisk Temple, but without further comment (1954, 80, n. 4, in reference to no. 1317): “Pieds-droits qu'on peut attribuer au dernier état du temple aux obélisques, sous Ramsès II.”

This shrine might have been located at the place of the Egyptian Temple (see map 2.4). It could have been its predecessor, since the blocks were found in the same area and the Egyptian character of the temple could hint at some continuity. Moreover, if the Egyptian Temple dating to the Persian period continued the tradition of a shrine of Ramses II, the latter might have replaced some earlier structure too. The temple of Thutmose III, which is attested only by scattered blocks, is an obvious candidate (§3.5 – see also §4.4.3, A. and §5.2.2). The succession of construction activities on the site could explain why so few traces of these New Kingdom shrines survived: Thutmose III's chapel would have been dismantled and replaced, or perhaps usurped and in part reused, under Ramses II, whose chapel would in turn have been dismantled and replaced by the Egyptian Temple in or just before the Persian Period. The Egyptian Temple is very close to the Temple of the Lady of Byblos and this must have been true for the chapels of Thutmose III and Ramses II as well, if they were its predecessors. Since the Lady of Byblos was the focus of Egyptian devotion, it would make sense that their religious buildings were in her temple complex, possibly annexed or at least close to it.

The Obelisk Temple and the Egyptian objects found there should be taken into consideration here. The predominance of Eighteenth Dynasty material



(see also §3.3 for the distribution of scarabs) could suggest that the Obelisk Temple was the predecessor of the Chapel of Ramses II and of the later Egyptian Temple, or at least that Thutmose III's shrine was in some way related to it.

The stele of the Iron Age king of Byblos Yehaw-milk (see Dunand 1941) could provide support for the idea that the Egyptian Temple, as well as any possible predecessor, were chapels connected with the Temple of the Lady of Byblos rather than independent sanctuaries belonging to other deities. This stele, which was found probably in situ in front of the Egyptian Temple, commemorates restoration works commissioned by the king in the Temple of the Lady of Byblos (Dunand 1941, 84–85), and could suggest that the two sanctuaries were somehow connected.

The presence of Egyptian chapels connected with the local Temple of the Lady of Byblos but architecturally distinct from it could also explain the paucity of New Kingdom Egyptian objects in the Temple of the Lady of Byblos observed by Dunand (1939, 116): if the Egyptian Temple and its possible New Kingdom predecessors were chapels connected with the Temple of the Lady of Byblos rather than distinct shrines, the majority of the Egyptian offerings for the goddess might have been deposited in those chapels, rather than in the main body of the temple itself.

## 6 The Temples of Byblos – Discussion

The Late Bronze Age religious landscape of Byblos was complex. The Temple of the Lady of Byblos was neither the only important temple in the city nor the only one involved in interactions with Egypt. Shrines or chapels of specifically Egyptian character were also present. The latest known one was the so-called Egyptian Temple, possibly built during the Persian Period. A chapel commissioned by Ramses II (§4.5), blocks from which were found nearby, and a shrine of Thutmose III attested by two blocks found out of context (§3.5), could have been its symbolic and architectural predecessors. The Obelisk Temple, in which Egyptian objects have been found, probably also participated in the interactions. The Egyptian chapels may have been related to this temple, as Dunand seems to have thought (1954, 80, n. 4; see above §4.5). Both the Obelisk Temple and the Egyptian chapels were also linked with the Temple of the Lady of Byblos. Steles mentioning the Temple of the Lady of Byblos were found both in the Obelisk Temple (§4.4.4) and in the later Egyptian Temple (§4.1), while the biographical text of Minmose (§5.2.2 below) suggests that building activities under Thutmose III in the city were related to the Temple of the Lady.



Therefore, rather than taking every sanctuary of the city as an independent entity, we should perhaps think of the religious buildings of Byblos as a cultic area composed of shrines and sacred spaces that interacted in an organic network of cultic, administrative, and economic relations.<sup>16</sup> The archaeological evidence, however, is insufficient for a detailed reconstruction. Similarly, we cannot know how the Egyptians perceived these shrines, whether as distinct sanctuaries or as different parts of a single cultic ensemble; in addition, we cannot know whether the Egyptian offerings reached them directly through Egyptian donations or whether they were first presented to a single authority – perhaps to the king or to the Temple of the Lady – and were then redistributed among the other sanctuaries. What is clear is that all these cultic places were involved both spiritually and economically in the city's international relations.

## 7 Necropolis K

Necropolis K was discovered in 1971 and excavated between 1972 and 1973 (Salles 1980). It is located in the eastern part of the archaeological area of Byblos. During the Late Bronze Age this area was outside the city walls. According to Jean-François Salles (1980, 7), who published the necropolis, the excavation was almost complete before the interruption imposed by the Lebanese civil war. The necropolis consists of a dozen subterranean rooms dug into the soft sandstone of the hill (Salles 1980, 10; fig. 4.35).

These rooms are all connected to one another. The original entrance was through a well (without number – indicated as “entrée” in fig. 4.35; see Salles 1980, 10), while a second access was dug in at a later period, possibly by looters, on the southern side (well KO – Salles 1980, 9, indicated as “puits sud” in fig. 4.35).

Similar necropolises existed elsewhere in the Levant, although usually they had multiple accesses and fewer rooms than in Byblos (Salles 1980, 15; §4.7 below). Typologically, Necropolis K can be compared to the royal tombs of Byblos found by Montet (Salles 1980, 15). It was in use, initially, from the Middle Bronze Age (the earliest material seems to date to the twentieth century BCE) to the Achaemenid period (Salles 1980, 5, 9, 10, 66), including the Late Bronze Age.

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Diego Espinel (2002), who takes the role of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos into consideration in the relations between the city and Egypt during the Old Kingdom. In particular, he stresses the possible role of the Lady of Byblos and her temple as a cultural bridge that would have facilitated the exchanges between Egypt and Byblos. His argument could be taken further, and other temples could have had a similar role, or could have been somehow involved in such interactions.

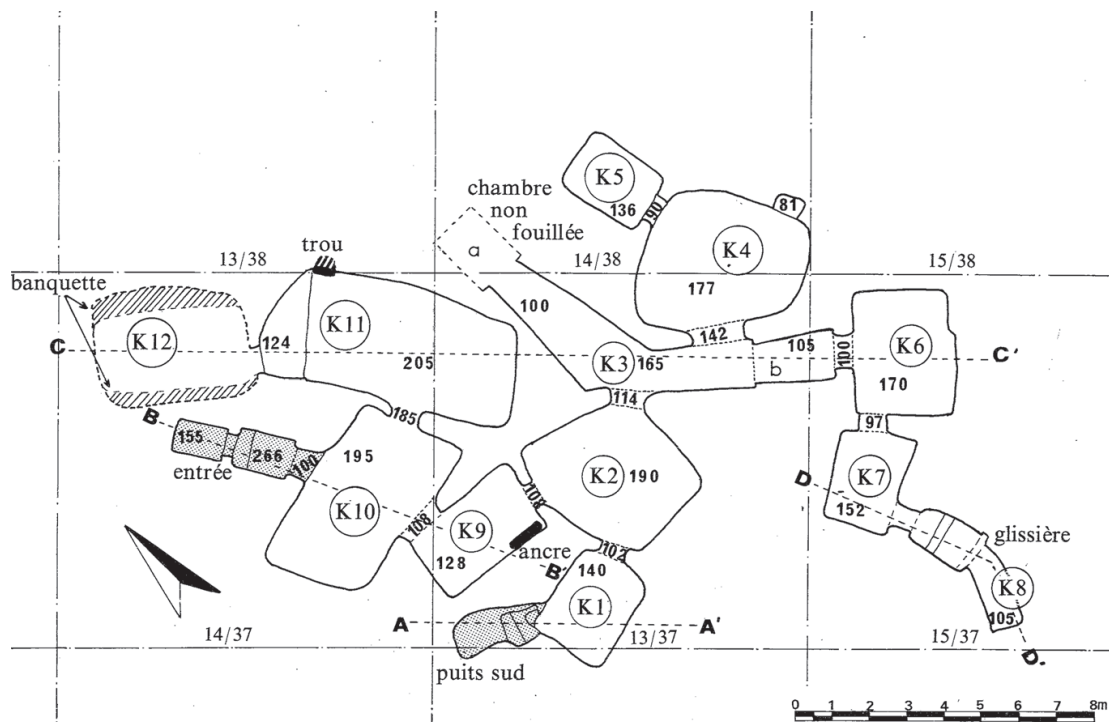


FIGURE 4.35 Plan of Necropolis K  
SALLES 1980, PL. 5

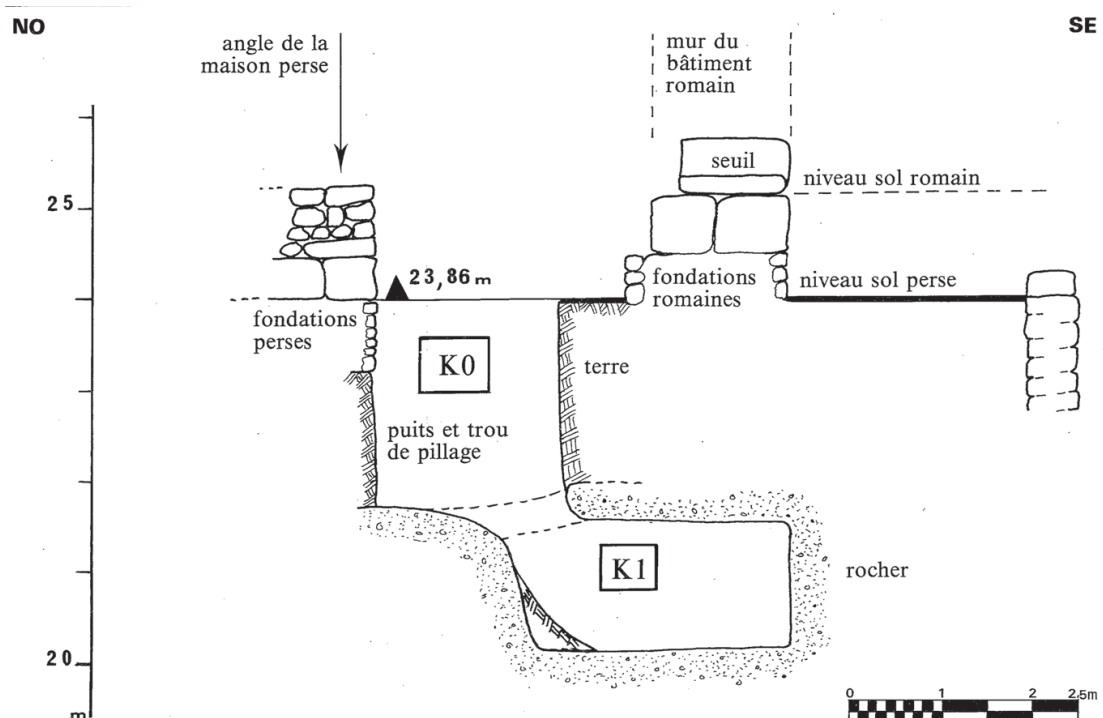


FIGURE 4.36 Section A-A' of Necropolis K (cf., fig. 4.350)  
SALLES 1980, PL. 3

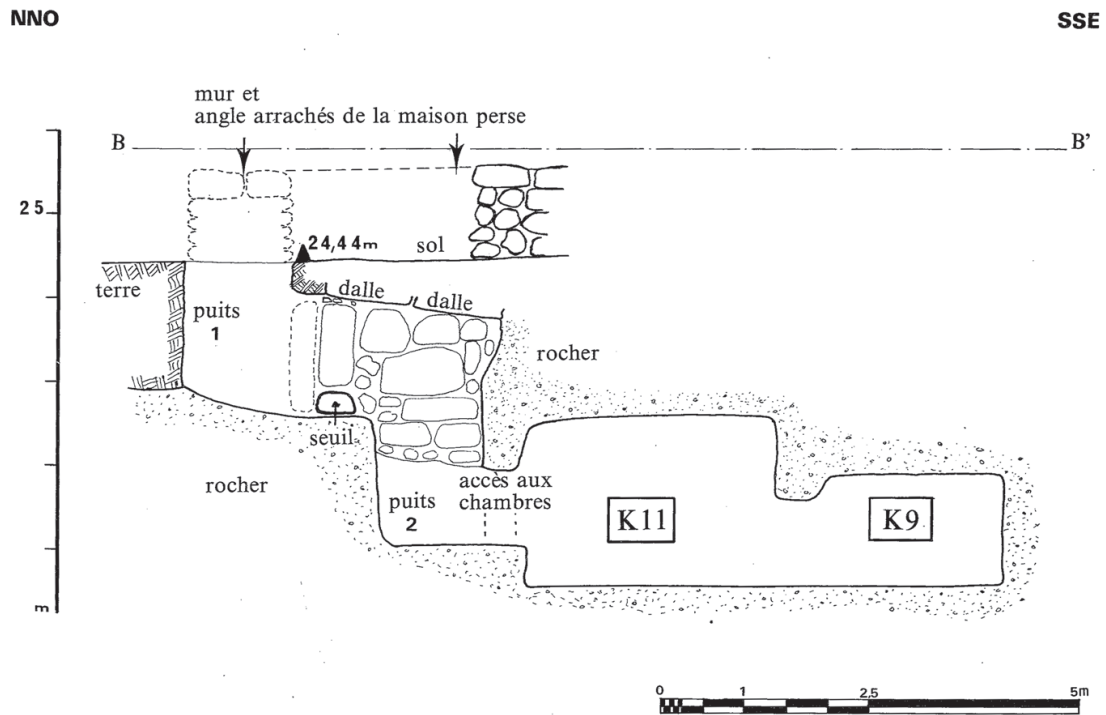


FIGURE 4.37 Section B-B' of Necropolis K (cf., fig. 4.35)  
SALLES 1980, PL. 4

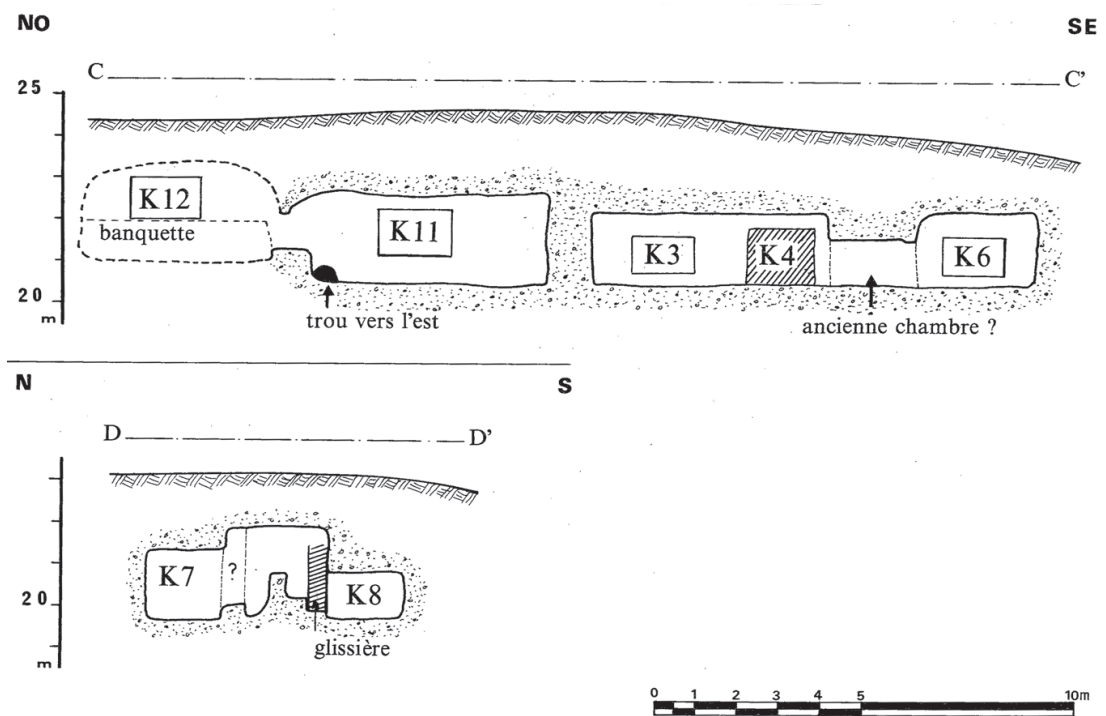


FIGURE 4.38 Sections C-C' and D-D' of Necropolis K (cf., fig. 4.35)  
SALLES 1980, PL. 6

It was then abandoned and probably forgotten for a couple of centuries, as suggested by the fact that in Persian times a fortress was constructed on the top of the hill and houses, possibly connected with the fortress, were built over the whole area (Salles 1980, 10). The necropolis was brought back into use during the Hellenistic period, and burials continued until the Roman period. The chronological sequence of the construction and use of its various rooms is not clear, but it is likely that the whole necropolis (K1–12) was in use before the Persian period (Salles 1980, 12, 14). Afterwards, however, rooms K1–8 were sealed, since Hellenistic and Roman inhumations are found only in rooms K9–12 (Salles 1980, 14). A stone anchor was used as a sealing stone for rooms K1–8. It is impossible to say if the use of such a stone reflects some religious custom in which the tombs were somehow related to the sea, or if it was just dictated by practical reasons.

The necropolis was visited and looted before the archaeologists discovered it, and only bones, pottery, and a few other scattered and largely uninformative objects were found. The bones, belonging to hundreds of individuals, were scattered through the rooms, and it was impossible to reconstitute any skeleton (Salles 1980, 12). As for the pottery, Salles took note only of complete vessels, or of sherds that could be fitted together, stating that it was impossible to record the thousands of fragments present everywhere (Salles 1980, 7, n. 3). Very little can thus be said about funerary practices, except that there were probably multiple depositions and that at times bones and offerings were moved and collected in specific chambers (K1–2) to make room for new inhumations (Salles 1980, 12, 14).

The most relevant feature of the necropolis for the present research is the abundance of Late Bronze Age Mycenaean and Cypriot vessels: sixty-five Mycenaean vessels (4.4% of the total – Salles 1980, 13, 30) and eighty Late Bronze Age Cypriot ones (9% of the total – Salles 1980, 24)<sup>17</sup> have been identified. Both open and closed forms are present among the group in the necropolis, which suggests that some of these vessels were deposited into the tombs for their content and others for their socio-economic value. Such large numbers show unequivocally that Byblos was integrated within the commercial network of the eastern Mediterranean and had active contacts with the regions from which the vessels came. The abundance of such vessels may even suggest the presence in the city of a Cypriot or Mycenaean trading post with a stable community, as in Ugarit, Sidon, and Tell Abu Hawam (Salles 1980, 65–66). As Salles recognised, however, at the moment this cannot be confirmed nor

17 According to Salles (1980, 13) the necropolis yielded eighty-eight Cypriot vessels and 118 fragments, but these figures probably include items that are not of the Late Bronze Age.

dismissed. Perhaps in the future petrographic analyses of these vessels could reveal whether they were imported or produced locally.

As pointed out by Salles (1980, 30, 66), the presence of LH III C Mycenaean pottery raises the question of the so-called Sea Peoples. Although the lack of clear archaeological layers for the end of the Bronze Age limits the understanding of that period in Byblos, there does not seem to be any evidence for any presence or attack of the Sea Peoples in the city (Salles 1980, 35, 66). Rather, the general continuity that can be observed in the temples suggests that, even if the city was affected by the changes and movements of populations that characterised the end of the Late Bronze Age, their impact must have been relatively limited. Nevertheless, the presence of pottery from this late phase shows that Byblos had contacts with groups that could have been associated with the Sea Peoples, and in general it suggests that at the time the city was still active in the international commercial scene.

Four Egyptian scarabs were found in the necropolis, two of the “Hyksos” type, one with the name of Thutmose III, and one with that of Amenhotep III. Because the material in the rooms was not stratified, nothing specific can be said about them, except that their presence shows that these objects were circulating in Byblos and were appropriate funerary offerings for non-royal tombs.<sup>18</sup>

## 8 The Royal Tombs and the Area of the Palace

The rocky hill at the north-western corner of the site is characterised by the presence of nine royal tombs. These tombs have the form of square pits a few metres deep, with underground burial chambers containing the stone sarcophagi of the kings of Byblos.

The tombs can be divided into two groups. The first group (tombs I–IV: Montet 1928–1929, 143; fig. 4.39) seems to date to the Middle Bronze Age and to the Second Intermediate Period (Kopetzky 2016). Some of these tombs were intact and yielded a wealth of precious objects, including Middle Kingdom Egyptian imports and Egyptianising local productions. The tombs of the second group (tombs V–IX) are later; all had been looted in antiquity and it is difficult to date them precisely. A few hints suggest that at least some of them could date to the end of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, while others could date to the Late Bronze Age (Montet 1928–1929, 213–14; fig. 4.39).

<sup>18</sup> On the scarabs found in the Middle Bronze royal tombs of Byblos see Montet (1928, 143–238; Boschloos 2011–2012).





of the tomb belongs in the thirteenth century BCE (Rehm 2004, 63, 67), two scenarios can be suggested. One of the possibilities is that the sarcophagus dates to the thirteenth century BCE and was usurped by Ahiiram in the tenth century BCE, either by adding only the inscription (Martin 1961) or by reshaping the whole sarcophagus (Délivré 1998). The second option is that Ahiiram usurped the tomb (or reused it in order to associate himself, in death, with his predecessors), but the sarcophagus is his and was introduced there in the tenth century BCE (Porada 1973). At present there does not seem to be any way to decide between these two possibilities (Rehm 2004, 69–70). New analyses<sup>19</sup> or the discovery of a similar sarcophagus in another site with a clearer chronological context could perhaps help to solve this issue.

However the sarcophagus is dated, the fact that the tomb and material in it date to the thirteenth century BCE and that it includes luxurious items such as Egyptian stone vessels show that Byblos's royal family enjoyed a period of prosperity around the time of Ramses II: building such monumental tombs was expensive and probably required some political stability (see §6.6.5).

The presence of royal tombs is also an important clue for the location of the royal palace. No archaeological evidence of Bronze Age royal quarters has been found in the city. As discussed above, however, it is a well-attested Levantine practice to have royal tombs in the area of the local palace (§2.2), and therefore their presence on the hill of Byblos might suggest that the latter was located there (Montet 1928–1929, 266; Nacousi 1985, 16–17; Margueron 1994, 22). This position would have the advantage of dominating the city and overlooking the sea. Moreover, as said in §2.2, the absence of archaeological remains would not be surprising there, because little survives below the Roman layers, which lie directly on the bedrock. It is clear that this gap in the archaeological record does not attest to an absence of occupation; rather, it is the result of natural or artificial destruction of earlier layers (Margueron 1994, 17, 19–20; see §2.2 above).

### 8.1 *Late Bronze Age Objects Found in Ahiiram's Tomb*

Below is a list of the objects found in the tomb of Ahiiram dating to the Late Bronze Age or potentially attesting to foreign interactions. For the Mycenaean pottery Leonard' numbers (1994) and Furumark shapes – FS – and motifs – FM –, when present (Furumark 1941a; Furumark 1941b) are given.

19 It is interesting to note that some bones have been found in these coffins (Montet 1928–1929, 217). Their current whereabouts are unknown, but if Montet kept them and if they could be recovered, perhaps carbon dating them could help confirming at least some of the dating.

- **No. Montet 864**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access shaft
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragment of a Mycenaean stirrup jar (FS SJ (Bd)/FM Linear) dated to LH IIIB (Leonard no. 1142). See also Dussaud 1930, 179, 8 (lower left).
- **No. Montet 866**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access well
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragment of a Mycenaean stirrup jar (FS SJ (Sh)/FM=73:3) dated to LH IIIB (Leonard no. 906). See also Dussaud 1930, 179, 8 (lower left).
- **No. Montet 881**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access well
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an unidentified faience object originally bearing some decoration and a hieroglyphic inscription. Only *ḥ3ty-<sup>c</sup> n* [..., "Count of [...]" is legible.
- **No. Montet 883**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access well
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an alabaster vessel bearing the name of Ramses II.  


The form of the name is that attested after year 21 of Ramses II (Montet 1928–1929, 225–26; Obsomer 2012, 67–68), and therefore the vessel must have reached Byblos after this date.
- **No. Montet 884**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access well
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel.
- **No. Montet 885**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Access well
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel.
- **No. Montet 887**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Burial chamber
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel dated to the New Kingdom by Montet.

- **No. Montet 888**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Burial chamber
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel.
- **No. Montet 889**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Burial chamber
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel.
- **No. Montet 889bis**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Burial chamber
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragments of an uninscribed alabaster vessel.
- **No. Montet 890**
  - Findspot: Ahiram's tomb – Burial chamber
  - Dimensions: not known
  - Description: Fragment of an alabaster vessel bearing the Horus name of Ramses II. Montet (1928, 227) suggested that the name may be written inside a *hwt* sign, possibly referring to a shrine founded by the king in the city. Perhaps this could be the chapel whose blocks were found by Dunand (§4.5).

The Mycenaean sherds can be compared with those found in Necropolis K (§4.7). The fact that both the sherds come from stirrup jars, which are closed forms, suggests that it was possibly the content as much as the container that was offered to the deceased. Similarly, the fragments of stone vessels bearing the name of Ramses II suggest exchanges with Egypt at the level of the Egyptian court. The fact that such fragments were found in a royal tomb may imply that the king of Byblos was involved in these exchanges.

## 9 The Nahr El-Kalb

The Nahr El-Kalb (“Dog River”) valley is about 18 km south of Byblos and 15 km north of Beirut. The valley, which is more than 20 km long, stretches from the sea into the inland towards the chain of Mount Lebanon (fig. 4.40).

A steep sandstone promontory stands on the south side of the river, at its mouth. This promontory is famous for its numerous rock inscriptions of many periods. The earliest are three inscriptions commissioned by Ramses II. They were published for the first time at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Two of them are still visible today, while Napoleon III had the third erased and covered with plaster in order to engrave a celebratory inscription about his own campaigns. The inscriptions were copied more than once (see in

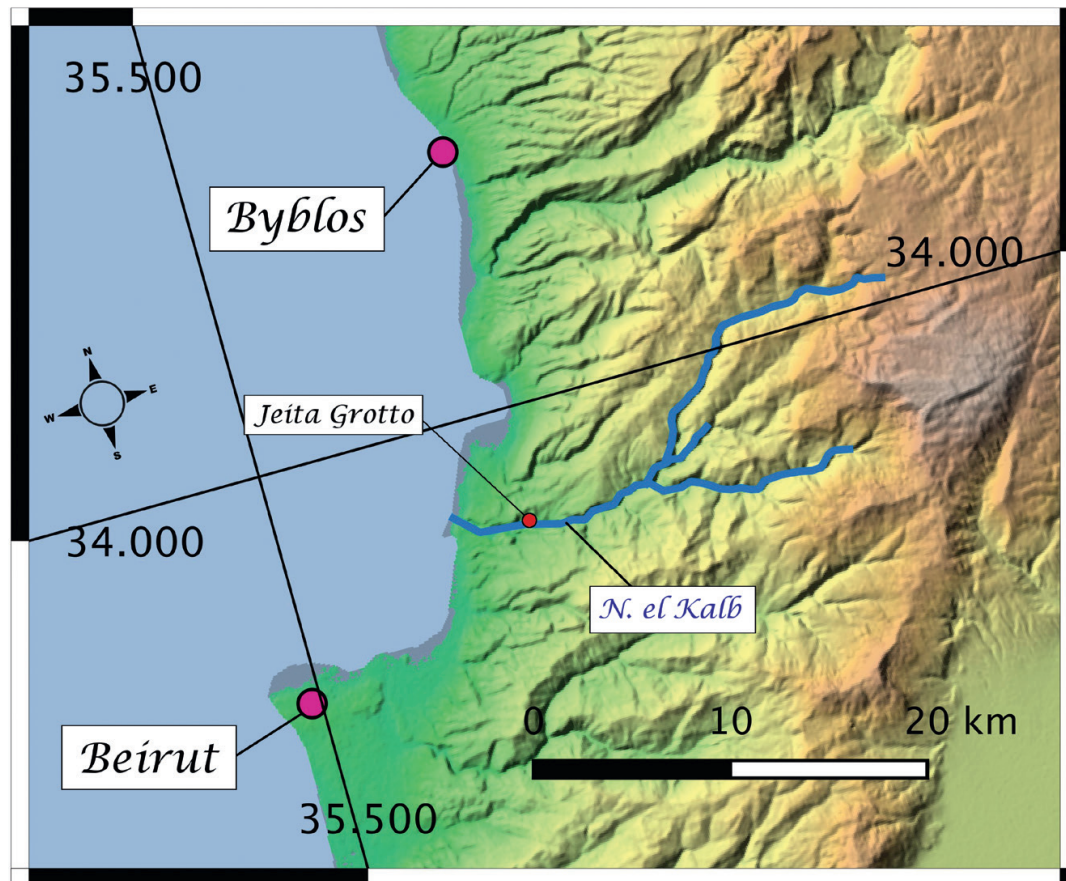


FIGURE 4.40 Nahr El-Kalb Valley

particular Bonomi 1839; Weissbach 1922; maila-afeiche\_site\_2009); a collation of two of them (the one destroyed and one of the two remaining) can also be found in *KRI* II 2.

All three texts are almost completely eroded away. Apart from a few traces of the scenes in the lunettes, only some cartouches of Ramses II, a few signs of the first lines of each inscription and some further isolated signs are preserved, but nothing beyond the introductory formulae can be translated from the main body of their texts. The dates of two inscriptions can still be read as years 4 and 10 of Ramses II (Weissbach 1922, 21–22). These dates correspond to Ramses II's first and sixth campaigns, and they suggest that the king was active or at least passed through the area of Byblos both before and after the battle of Qadesh, which took place in year 5 (Cavillier 2002a; Obsomer 2012, 122–25, 187–89; see also Thum 2016, 72–75).

The location of these inscriptions at the mouth of the Nahr El-Kalb could be explained by the prominence of the cliff, just above a narrowing in the coastal road. Moreover, it could also evoke a symbolic value attached to the valley, since one of the main sources of the Nahr El-Kalb springs from one of the most impressive caves of Lebanon, the Jeita Grotto, where prehistoric and



Early Bronze Age material has been found (Copeland and Wescombe 1965, 90–91). Caves were also present at the basis of the cliff itself, although they were sealed during the construction of the now disappeared railroad (Yazbeck 2009). Some of them (Ras El-Kalb II and Ras El-Kalb III) yielded Chalcolithic and Late Bronze Age material suggesting the presence of tombs (Copeland and Wescombe 1965, 123–25; Yazbeck 2009, 191). Furthermore, living rock inscriptions may have also had the function of stating the Pharaoh's ownership of the territory (Liverani 1990b, 59; Thum 2016). This could have been particularly true in the northern Levant, where the Hittites had a well-established tradition of using living rock steles to claim disputed territories (Glatz and Plourde 2011; Thum 2016, 69). Finally, the Nahr El-Kalb is also roughly located halfway between Beirut and Byblos, and the former city can be seen from the top of the cliff bearing the inscriptions. All these features make the Nahr El-Kalb an ideal, symbolically freighted natural border between the two kingdoms. Whether or not their frontier was at the Nahr El-Kalb itself, it was probably somewhere in that area.

## Written Sources

### 1 Thutmose III

The first attestations of Byblos in Late Bronze Age written sources come from Egypt and date to the reign of Thutmose III. No non-Egyptian mentions of the city have been identified for the period corresponding to his reign.

#### 1.1 *Gebel Barkal Stele*

The so-called Gebel Barkal stele was found by the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition in 1920, face down in the Temple of Amun at Gebel Barkal in Nubia.<sup>1</sup> The text is dated to year 47 of Thutmose III, and was composed on the occasion of an expedition of the king in the area (Der Manuelian 2006, 413; Spalinger 2006, 361, 366).

The year 47 date is five years after the last entry in the surviving Annals (Cline and O'Connor 2006, 29). Because of its structure and content, Redford (2003, 101–2) interprets the text as a *ḥmst-nsw*, that is an inscription presenting a discourse of the king. As he points out, “while the form [of these texts] need not presuppose the reality, there is a good *a priori* case to be made ... that an historical ‘seance’ may in fact underly such texts” (Redford 2003, 101; see also Spalinger 1982, 193–221). If Redford is right, the king’s speech could have taken place during a visit to the area. As suggested by Morris (2005, 198, 207), it is likely that the text’s audience was the local community of Egyptian settlers, and its aim was to boast the achievements of the Pharaoh through the choice of the topics treated in it. For example, the many references to the victorious deeds of the king in the Levant – at the other end of the empire from the stele – were probably meant to exalt the power and grandeur of the king.

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1 Findspot: rooms B 501, III–V, VI of the Temple of Amun. Current location: Boston Museum of Fine Arts – MFA 23.733. Material: granite (Reisner and Reisner 1933, 24). Dimensions: 173 × 97 × 15 cm (Reisner and Reisner 1933, 24). Publication and general bibliography: *Urk.* IV 1227–43; Reisner and Reisner 1933; Leprohon 1991, 23.733 3/5; Beylage 2002, 171–203, 652–71; Klug 2002, 193–208; Redford 2003, 103–19. General description: the lower right-hand corner was broken away in ancient times; the top and side edges are worn (Reisner and Reisner 1933, 24).

The text is composed of a series of clearly distinct episodes, ranging from reminiscences of campaigns and payments of tribute, to an elephant hunt and the miraculous appearance (or falling?) of a star.<sup>2</sup> The episodes are not in geographical or chronological order and focus instead on the glorification of the king and his actions.

Byblos is mentioned only once, in an episode that is not attested in other surviving texts from the reign. The stele narrates two other episodes related to Lebanese cities and Lebanon in general that are relevant here. The first gives valuable information about the geopolitical landscape of the coastal region of Lebanon, especially when compared with a parallel passage in the *Annals*, while the second seems to refer to the expedition to Byblos described by Sennefri in his tomb (see §5.2.3). I present these three passages relating to Byblos and its region in the order in which they occur in the stele. The first passage is in lines 11–12 (*Urk.* IV 1232:1–6; Reisner and Reisner 1933, 28–29, pl. iv):

#### Passage A

|                                                           |                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>11</sup> <i>jst d3~n hm=j r phww nw stt</i>          | Now my Majesty crossed to the<br>ends of Asia;                           |
| <i>jw rdj~n=j mdh=tw 'h'w š3w nw š</i>                    | I caused many ships to be built of<br>š-wood                             |
| <i>hr dww nw t3-ntr</i>                                   | from the hills of God's Land                                             |
| <i>m-h3w t3 nbt kpny</i>                                  | in the neighbourhood of the Lady<br>of Byblos;                           |
| <i>rdj hr wrrywt</i>                                      | they were placed on carts                                                |
| <i>jhw hr st3</i>                                         | and oxen pulled (them);                                                  |
| <i>sqd=sn hr-<sup>12</sup> [h3t] hm=j r d3t jtrw pf 3</i> | they sailed [before] My Majesty to<br>cross that great river             |
| <i>jr(r) r-jmytw h3st tn r nhrn</i>                       | that flows (lit. “makes”) between<br>this land and Naharin. <sup>a</sup> |

a. This is the usual translation of this passage, offered also by Gardiner (1957, §177). This, however, is the only example he gave of this construction. See further below.

2 But see Winkler 2013, who thinks the mention of the miraculous star should be understood as a metaphor representing the king.

This excerpt comes from a passage narrating events of the eighth campaign, in year 33 (Redford 2003, 105, 220–28, Cline and O'Connor 2006, 29–30, Redford 2006, 333–34). Thutmose III is said to have sailed from Egypt to Byblos, where he had ships built from local wood in order to attack Mitanni. The ships were then transported by his army on the march towards the interior of Syria. It is generally assumed that these ships were used to cross the Euphrates (e.g., Redford 2003, 106–7). However, I wonder if this was really their main purpose, as the river is hundreds of kilometres inland and the action of the Egyptian troops on its other side seems to have been just a demonstration of power culminating in the erection of a stele. Rather, they could have been used to move the army faster within Syria, possibly navigating the Orontes, which flows northwards from the north of the Beqa'a Valley and was probably at least partially navigable for small boats, from Hama and perhaps even from Homs (see Butcher 2003, 133–34). This would not exclude the possibility of the boats being re-employed to cross the Euphrates later in the campaign.

The fact that the ships were built near Byblos suggests that the city controlled considerable forest resources. Moreover, the ships are built using wood from the “God’s Land” in the neighbourhood of the Lady of Byblos (line 11), not simply “from Byblos.” The emphasis is on the goddess, and the text refers to the city through her. The strong association between the city and her goddess is well attested in the Old and Middle Kingdoms, and continued in later periods (see §5.2.5.2, §6.5.0.1).

These events took place during the eighth campaign in year 33. Thutmose III had been campaigning on the Lebanese coast at least since year 29, which suggests that at the time the Egyptians probably had good knowledge of the local geographical and geopolitical situation. Therefore, the choice of Byblos could have been influenced by strategic considerations: Byblos may have been safer, and more loyal and willing to help the Egyptians than other cities on the Levantine coast. Here, the special relationship between the city and Egypt, formulated in religious terms by the mention of the Lady of Byblos, was probably significant (see §5.2.5, §6.5.0.1 and §6.5.0.2).

Two other passages refer to Lebanon and are relevant to Byblos. The first is in lines 30–32 (*Urk.* IV 1237:9–1238:2; Reisner and Reisner 1933, 34–35, pl. v):

### Passage B

<sup>30</sup> *mdḥ* [*n=j m dʒ*]*hy tñw rnpt nbt*

*m š mʒ' n rmnn*

(Wood) was hewn [for me in Dja]hy  
each and every year  
from real š-wood of Lebanon

*jnw r stp-sʒ ʿw.s.*

*jw n=j ḥwdt r kmt šḥntw [...]*

<sup>31</sup> [... šʒ?] mʒ[ʿ] n ngʒw  
m stp n tʒ-nṯr  
swʒd st  
mʒ[ʿw? tp?] mj šs[ʿ]r [p]rt r ḥnw

*nn snt jw trw jry ṯnw rnpt nbt*

*jw mšʿ=j nty m jwʿyt m wʒnrʒtʒ*

<sup>32</sup> [...] n[t]y m šʒ n ḥṯw ḥm=j

*m šḥrw jt=j [jmn-rʿ]*

*wḏ n=j ḥʒstyw nbt*  
*n rdj=j jm=w n sttyw*  
*ḥt pw mr=f*  
*wʿf=f mtr=sn n nb=j*

*qsn=sn ḥtp [...]*

which was brought to the palace  
l.p.h.

A wealth (of timber<sup>a</sup>) comes for me  
to Egypt, brought south [...]

[...] real [šʒ-wood?] of Negau  
the best of God's Land,  
having been despatched  
with its ballast in good order(?)<sup>b</sup>, to  
[co]me out to the residence  
without the passing of the  
coming of the season thereof each  
and every year.

My troops, which are as a garrison in  
Ullassa,<sup>c</sup> come

[...] which is šʒ-wood from the victo-  
ries<sup>d</sup> of My Majesty  
through the plans of my father  
[Amun-Ra]

who allotted to me all foreigners.

I did not give of it to the Asiatics,  
(since) it is wood that he loves.

He subdued, (so that) they would  
testify<sup>e</sup> to my lord,

their recalcitrance being pacified [...]

a. The determinative 𓂏 (M3) shows that a wealth of timber is meant.

b. This is the reconstruction and translation suggested by Redford (2003, 111 n. 36). Alternatively he also suggests "... (sent off) in the right direction, its ballast in good order ..." These are only two among many possible reconstructions. The passage is too fragmentary for confident restoration.

c. Or "from the garrison in Ullassa."

d. According to Galán (1995, 65–66), the word *nḥtw* could refer to the booty – resulting from the *nḥt*, "success," "achievement," of the king – which was displayed and seen, and which was thus probably somehow comparable to *jnw* and *bʒk*.

e. This is a difficult passage. Redford (2003, 112) translates "he has enforced (it) so that they operate regularly for 'The Lord', (even though) they be irked being in a state of peace (?)," Klug (2002, 201) translates "Er eroberte, indem sie meinen Herrn anerkennen, (und) indem ihr Leid befriedigt (d.h. beseitigt) ist," while Beylage (2002, 195) renders "Er erobert, und wenn sie meinen Herrn bezeugen, so hat ihr Leiden ein Ende."



This passage is probably to be related to the following excerpts of the Annals (*Urk.* IV 700.6–9, and similarly *Urk.* IV 713:46, 732:6–7; see also Redford 1990, 40–63; Redford 2003, 75):

*jst* <sup>26</sup> *n nʒ n mnjw t ssp d m ht nb(t) mj htr=sn*  
*mj nt-ʿ=sn nt tnw rnpt*  
*hnʿ bʒk n rʒmnn mj nt-ʿ=sn n tnw rnpt*  
*hnʿ wrw nw rmn[n ...*

Now the harbours were provided (*sspd*) with everything according to their dues quota, according to their annual written agreement (*nt-ʿ*), together with the *bʒk* of Lebanon according to their annual written agreement and with (that of?) the chiefs of Leban[on ...

and with the following (*Urk.* IV 719:7–10; cf. *Urk.* IV 723:4–7 for a similar passage; see also Redford 1990, 40–63; Redford 2003, 89, 91):

<sup>90</sup> *jst n nʒ n mnjw t ssp d m ht nb(t) nfrt*  
*mj nt-ʿ=sn nt tnw rnpt*  
*m [hd] m hntyt*  
*bʒkw n rʒmnn r-mjtt*

Now the harbours were provided (*sspd*) with every good thing, according to their annual written agreement (*nt-ʿ*) (for?) [sailing northwards] and sailing southwards (with? / of?) the *bʒkw* of Lebanon likewise.

These excerpts describe the annual (*nt tnw rnpt*) equipment (*sspd*) and delivery of *htr* and *bʒk* taxes of Lebanon to the coastal harbours (*mnjw t*). These ports are generally interpreted as (some of) the Lebanese coastal cities themselves (e.g., Redford 1990, 56–61; Redford 2003, 219; Spalinger 2006, 362). These passages seem to suggest that, after the fifth campaign, these *mnjw t* had been transformed by the Egyptians into collecting posts for the local revenues of “taxes” and impositions,<sup>3</sup> possibly as strategic storage depots along maritime routes (Redford 1990, 56–61, 328). None of these *mnjw t* is explicitly named, but it is quite likely that Byblos was one of them, and the temple built or restored there by Thutmose III (see §3.5, §4.5 §4.6, §5.2.2) – or some storehouses in other areas of the city but belonging to it – could have been the focal point

3 On the meaning of *bʒkw* and *htr*, and on the related *jnw*, see Kruchten 1980; Bleiberg 1984; 1988; Gordon 1984; 1996; Janssen 1993; Galán 1995, 66; Quirke 1998; Liverani 2001, 176–82.

of this revenue collection (Morris 2005, 121, 139 and §5.2.5.2). As for the other “harbours,” considering what is known about the geopolitical situation of the region, some suggestions can be advanced. Two cities seem to me to be particularly likely candidates: Ullassa, which seems to have hosted an Egyptian garrison (mentioned in the present passage of the Gebel Barkal stele; see also §5.4.5 for references to it in the Amarna letters); and Sumur, if its important administrative role in the late Eighteenth Dynasty as attested by the Amarna letters could have had its origin in the reign of Thutmose III (see §5.4.5). Another possibility is Tyre, which was located at the mouth of the Litani river and therefore was a strategic access point to the Beqa’a Valley; in the Amarna letters this city is referred to with curious and puzzling epithets,<sup>4</sup> which perhaps could refer to some special role it had in the Egyptian administration of the region (see Katzenstein 1973, 37–39). However, the role and importance of Tyre during the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty is quite obscure, as archaeological evidence for the period is lacking and the city is almost completely absent from written sources of the Eighteenth Dynasty, apart from the Amarna letters and Amenhotep III’s topographical list discussed below (§5.3.2). A final possibility is Sidon, but this city is not mentioned at all in any Egyptian sources apart from the Amarna letters, Pap. Anastasi I (§5.6.1), which dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty, and the *Tale of Wenamun*, which is even later (§5.7). The only hint of a possible role played by Sidon in the Egyptian administration in the region comes from the Amarna letters, where an unnamed Pharaoh, probably Thutmose IV, is said to have visited it (*EA* 85; see Givon 1969, 56, 58).

The term *nt-ʿ*, translated above as “written agreement,” requires comment as well. However, since it does not appear specifically in the Gebel Barkal stele, its meaning and potential historical relevance is treated in more detail in §5.2.5.1.

The economic influx represented by the collection of resources must have benefited the cities that were “provided” (*sspd*), in this way. This flow of goods traversed the sea and reached Egypt: *m[hḏ] m ḥntyt* “[sailing northwards] and sailing southwards” probably refers to the ships going northwards from Egypt and southwards towards Egypt. The need for harbours points to regular maritime traffic and a stream of goods.

This flow, which was probably bidirectional,<sup>5</sup> constituted a form of trade and is probably referred to in the present passage of the Gebel Barkal stele. Its characterisation as annual both in the Annals and in the stele points to its

4 Namely: URU *ra-bi-tu*, “capital city” (*EA* 147:62), GEME<sub>2</sub> LUGAL, “servant girl of the king” (*EA* 149:10), URULUGA[L], “city of the king” (*EA* 150:7, 151.6 passim), URU *m.MI<sub>2</sub> ma-ia<sub>8</sub>-a-ti*, “the city of Mayati (possibly princess and later queen Merytaten)” (155.42 passim).

5 Although there is no explicit source confirming that for the time of Thutmose III, this is a reasonable assumption that is confirmed in later period, for instance by the Amarna letters (see below §5.4.4, see also §6.3.0.2).

regularity; the *jw trw jry*, the “passing of the coming of the season thereof,” in the Gebel Barkal stele, instead, suggests a seasonal pattern. Maritime trade between Egypt and the Levant was indeed probably seasonal, because winter was a season of storms and difficult sea conditions in the eastern Mediterranean (e.g., Sauvage 2008, 210–11; 2012, 168, 265–67 for discussion and bibliography; and Liverani 1990a in relation to the Amarna Letters).

The presentation of this flow of goods as unidirectional in the Gebel Barkal stele and in the Annals, as something that Egypt/Amun takes because it/he owns it (line 32), without mention of any “payment” or transaction in general, may relate to its partly tributary character, but it could also be ideological. Although Redford (1990, 40–63; 2003, 4 with references) suggests that the sections of the Annals discussed here could have been based on and shaped by administrative documents, and therefore may be relatively accurate representations of the nature of these economic transactions, one has to keep in mind these texts were conceived first of all as ideological compositions (Baines 1996; 2008).

Such a separation between the reality of these exchanges and the way they are presented in ideologically oriented sources like the Gebel Barkal stele has been discussed in detail by Liverani (2001; see also §5.2.5 and §6.5), who observes that a similar dichotomy exists also in the story of Wenamun: when finally received by the king of Byblos, Wenamun claims Amun’s ownership of and love for the wood of Lebanon,<sup>6</sup> an idea that also appears in the Gebel Barkal stele. The fact however that in the end Wenamun has to pay to obtain the wood shows that his claims are an ideological construct to mask an otherwise ideologically unacceptable commercial exchange.

The Gebel Barkal stele adds details that are absent in the Annals. The main commodity traded is wood, which is not surprising as Lebanon was famous for it, not only in Egypt. It is notable, however, that this wood was fetched, at least in part, by Egyptian soldiers, who according to the stele were based in Ullassa. Their involvement is supported by an image in the tomb of Sennefri (Strudwick 2016b, 106–7, pl. 17B; see §5.2.3) and by a passage of the Annals for the ninth campaign, in year 34 (*Urk.* IV 707:10–14):

*jst mnjw nb(wt) nt hm=f sspdw*  
*m ht nbt nfrt nt šsp hm[=f hr? h3st d3]hy*  
*m š*  
*kftjw k3pnwt s[k]tw 3tp m wh3w s3wt*  
*hn htw 3w n md[hw jw]yt a n hm=f*

<sup>6</sup> Wen. 2:24, 2:28, 2:34, at least if one takes *r-b-r-n* as a word for “juniper” (Kilani 2016a).

Now all the harbours of His Majesty were provided  
 with every good thing that [His] Majesty received [from?] Djahy  
 and with š-wood  
 (while) (the) *kftyw*, *kbnwt* and *s[k]tw* ships<sup>b</sup> were loaded with poles and  
 boards  
 together with the big timbers that the [garri]son of His Majesty cu[t].

a. Convincingly suggested by Redford (2003, 80, n. 139). Sethe suggested *šw* (*Urk.* IV 707:14).

b. On these types of ship see Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 46–50; Martin-Pardey 1984; Jones 1995, 73; Wachsmann 1998, 51–52; Ward 2012.

This passage does not say where these Egyptian troops were based, whereas the Gebel Barkal stele states that they were *jwyt m wšnrštš*, “a garrison in Ullassa” (line 31). Perhaps these soldiers could be the same as those mentioned in the later passage of the stele treated below. The cutting of these flagpoles is probably also depicted in the tomb of Sennefri, where Egyptian soldiers come out of a Levantine fortified city to cut wood (de Garis Davies and de Garis Davies 1933, 30–31, pl. 36). The surviving inscription in Sennefri’s tomb does not mention Ullassa, and it is Byblos, which is either mentioned or implied by allusion to its goddess, that seems to have been the focal point of his expedition (§5.2.3; see also §5.2.5).

This passage raises the issue of the predominance of Byblos in the sources of the period: if trade with various Lebanese harbours was normal, some factor other than its wood and products must have caused Byblos to stand out in Egyptian eyes. This question is discussed in more detail below (§5.2.5).

The last passage of the Gebel Barkal stele involving Lebanon concerns the expedition that Thutmose III organised to acquire flagpoles for the Temple of Amun in Karnak (lines 44–48: *Urk.* IV 1241:11–1242:13; Reisner and Reisner 1933, 38, pl. v):

### Passage C

<sup>44</sup> *[rdj~n]=j hryt=j m phww nw stt*

*nn dnjw wpwty=j<sup>a</sup>*

*jn mš<sup>c</sup>=j swš snwt m htjw nw š*

*hr dww [nw] t3-ntr [...]*

[I spread] my dread in the ends of  
 Asia

without my messenger being  
 hindered.

It is my army which cut down the  
 flagpoles on the slopes of š-wood  
 on the hills [of] God’s Land [...]

|                                                                                        |                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>45</sup> [...] <i>r mnw jtw=j</i>                                                 | [...] for the monuments of my fathers,                                         |
| <i>nt<sub>rw</sub> nbw nw šm<sup>c</sup>w m<sub>h</sub>w</i>                           | all the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt.                                         |
| <i>jw md<sub>h</sub>~n hm=j dpt nt hnt nt š</i> [...]                                  | My Majesty hewed a processional ship of š-wood [...]                           |
| [... $\varnothing$ M1? <sup>b</sup> ] <i>hr mryt [n] rmnn m mnn</i>                    | [... trees?] in/on the shore [of] Lebanon in the fortress [...]                |
| <sup>46</sup> [ <i>w</i> ]                                                             | [...]                                                                          |
| [...]                                                                                  | all the chiefs of Lebanon [carp]                                               |
| [ <i>n</i> ] <i>dr wrw nbw rmnnny jmww-ns<sub>w</sub></i>                              | entered royal ships                                                            |
| [...] <i>r šhnt jm=sn</i>                                                              | [...] to transport southwards in them                                          |
| <i>r jnt bj<sub>3</sub>yt nbt [nt h]nt(y)-š r stp-s<sub>3</sub> <sup>c</sup>.w.s</i>   | and to bring all kinds of precious goods [of Kh]enty-she to the palace l.p.h., |
| <i>wrw nw</i> <sup>47</sup> [...]                                                      | the chiefs of [...]                                                            |
| [...]                                                                                  | [...]                                                                          |
| [...] <i>jn (?) wrw nw rt<sub>n</sub>w st<sub>3</sub> n<sub>3</sub> n snwt</i>         | [... it is (?)] the chiefs of Retenu                                           |
| <i>hr j<sub>h</sub>w r mryt</i>                                                        | who dragged these flagpoles with (lit. “on”) oxen to the shore;                |
| <i>ntst jy hr b<sub>3</sub>kw=sn</i>                                                   | it is they who came bearing their <i>b<sub>3</sub>kw</i> -impositions          |
| <i>r bw hr hm=f r hn<sub>w</sub> m</i> <sup>48</sup> [...]                             | to the place where his Majesty was, to the residence in [...] [...]            |
| [...]                                                                                  | [...]                                                                          |
| <i>hr m<sub>3</sub><sup>c</sup> nb nfr jnw m bj<sub>3</sub>yt<sup>c</sup> rs</i> [...] | bearing all good products that were brought as wonders of the south            |
| [...]                                                                                  | [...]                                                                          |
| <i>h<sub>tr</sub>w m b<sub>3</sub>kw n hrt-rnpt</i>                                    | charged as annual <i>b<sub>3</sub>kw</i> -impositions                          |
| <i>mj ndt nbt nt hm=j</i>                                                              | like all the subjects of My Majesty.                                           |

- On messengers see Valloggia 1976; Liverani 2001, 71–78, especially 73–74 on the significance of being able to send messengers in safety.
- The sign  $\varnothing$  (M1) seems to appear at the end of the lacuna. Is it the determinative of a word for a kind of tree or wood?
- On *bj<sub>3</sub>yt* see Graefe 1971; Liverani 2001, 176–82.



Even though this passage of the Gebel Barkal stele does not refer explicitly to Byblos, it does mention *rmnn*, “Lebanon,” *hnt(y)-š*, “Khenty-she” (another term for Lebanon, probably referring to the coast and its forests – *LÄ* I 1013; *WB* III, 310–11) and the *dww [nw] t3-ntr*, the “hills of the God’s Land.” The name of the city could have occurred in lost areas of the text, or could have been superfluous since all these terms, and *t3-ntr* “God’s Land” in particular, refer to its region (see Cooper 2011). This expedition to obtain flagpoles is thus comparable with, and probably is the same as, that depicted in Sennefri’s tomb (see §5.2.3). The fact that the flagpoles are mentioned in the ideologically freighted Gebel Barkal stele in the far south of the territory controlled by Egypt reinforces the idea that this mission had strong symbolic importance.

In contrast with Sennefri’s account, however, the Gebel Barkal stele focuses more on the act of obtaining and setting up the flagpoles than on the expedition itself. This difference in the descriptions may be a matter of perspective: the Gebel Barkal text presents the event from the point of view of the king who commissioned the expedition, and it focuses on its achievements rather than on the details of its execution. Sennefri’s version, in contrast, is the account of the person who led the expedition, who therefore was eager to describe the journey itself, emphasizing his role and deeds in accomplishing this mission for the king and Amun.

In line 45 the text mentions a *dpt nt hnt nt š*, a “processional ship of š-wood.” Is this a sacred bark for a temple, perhaps for the temple of Amun in Karnak? This possibility, besides being an interesting parallel for Wenamun, would confirm once again the strong religious connections between Egypt and the city during the reign of Thutmose III.

In line 46 there is a mention of a fortress. The location of this fortress has been much discussed: Byblos and Ullassa seem the most likely options, but Tyre, Sidon, and even the Galilee have been suggested (Morris 2005, 153–58 with references). Other sources from the time of Thutmose III mention a fortress in the Levant, which could be the same. They are discussed in more detail in §5.2.5.1 below.

Finally, a curious technical detail: the use of oxen to draw the timbers, mentioned in line 47, appears also centuries later in the text of Wenamun (Wen. 2:43; Schipper 2005, 82; see §6.3.0.1 and §6.3.0.2). Evidently, this aspect of the process of obtaining wood did not change much during the last centuries of the Bronze Age.

## 1.2 *Statue of Minmose*

Byblos is mentioned in another text. The relatively well-preserved biographical inscription of Minmose, carved on a granodiorite squatting statue that has

lost its head, was discovered in 1926 in the Great East Court of the temple of Montu at Medamud (Drioton 1927, 52–56). Minmose was a “count” (*ḥ3ty-*), an “overseer of the prophets of Montu Lord of Thebes” (*jmy-r3 ḥmw-ntr n mntw nb w3st*), an “overseer of the works in the temples of [all?] the Gods” (*jmy-r3 m r3w-prw nw ntrw [nbw?]*), and a “royal scribe” (*sh nsw*) under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II (Drioton 1927, 53).

His career can be reconstructed from various documents. In his early years, he followed Thutmose III in his campaigns in Syria. Later, as his titles suggest, he was chief architect for the whole of Egypt, and as such he claimed to have supervised the construction of numerous temples. He also held various religious titles, which however could have been related to his position as architect, and could thus have been at least in part honorary (see Kees 1953, 33–35; Meulenaere 1981, 318; Der Manuelian 1987, 164–66).

The biographical text on Minmose’s statue describes what he saw and did as a servant of Thutmose III, and the reference to Byblos occurs in a section recording the building activities that he supervised (*Urk.* IV 1442:15). Vernus (1978, 29) suggests, from this text as well as from a stele from Tura, that these works were completed under Amenhotep II. The relevant passage is as follows (*Urk.* IV 1442:16–1443:25):

|                                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <sup>14</sup> <i>m3~n(=j) rwdt-ḥm=f ḥr ḥpr m ḥ3</i> | (I) saw the strength of the hand of |
| <i>ḥr ḥ3q dmj 30 m-ḥn<sup>15</sup>w w n thsy</i>    | His Majesty when he was in battle   |
| <i>jnw wrw=sn ḥrw=sn mnmnt<sup>16</sup>=sn</i>      | plundering 30 towns within the      |
| <i>sšm~n(=j) mšc qnj n nsw</i>                      | region of Takhsi.                   |
| <i>tj wj m rwdw n nsw m jr<sup>17</sup>w ddwt</i>   | Their chiefs, their subjects, their |
| <i>jw rd~n ḥm=f m ḥr=j r ḥrp k3wt</i>               | herds were taken away.              |
| <i>m r3w-pr nw ntrw nbw [...]</i>                   | (I) led the brave army of His       |
| <sup>18</sup> <i>mnt(w) nb w3st, k3 ḥr-jb m3dw</i>  | Majesty,                            |
| <i>n wp-w3wt nb s3wty</i>                           | while I was agent of his Majesty as |
| <i>[n]n ḥwt-ḥr nbt tp jḥw</i>                       | executor of the orders.             |
| <i>n<sup>19</sup>b3stt nbt ḥt-t3wy</i>              | His Majesty instructed me to direct |
|                                                     | the works                           |
|                                                     | in the temples of all the gods:     |
|                                                     | of Montu, Lord of Thebes, Bull who  |
|                                                     | is in Medamud                       |
|                                                     | of Wepwawet, Lord of Asyut,         |
|                                                     | of Hathor, Lady of Atfih,           |
|                                                     | of Bastet, Lady of Ankh-Tawy        |
|                                                     | (Memphis),                          |

|                                                      |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>n spdw n j3ty spdw</i>                            | of Sopdu, Lord of the two hills of Sopdu,                                              |
| <i>n hr nb hm</i>                                    | of Horus, Lord of Letopolis,                                                           |
| <i>n hnm hnt(y) w3t[=f?]</i>                         | of Khnum, who is in front of [his] path (?)                                            |
| <sup>20</sup> <i>n shmt hntt h3s(t)</i>              | of Sekhmet who is the foremost of the desert                                           |
| <i>n hr-r<sup>c</sup> nb s3hbw</i>                   | of Horus-Ra, Lord of Sakhbu,                                                           |
| <i>n hwt-hr nbt jm3w</i>                             | of Hathor, Lady of Imau (Kom El-Hisn),                                                 |
| <i>n w3d[t nbt] p dp</i>                             | of Wadje[t, Lady of] Pe and Dep,                                                       |
| <sup>21</sup> <i>n wsjr nb dd[w]</i>                 | of Osiris, Lord of Busir[is],                                                          |
| <i>n hr-hnty-hjt m km-wr</i>                         | of Horus-Khentekhtai, in (the nome of) the Black Bull (Athribis),                      |
| <i>n b3stt nb[t ...]</i>                             | of Bastet, Lad[y of ...]                                                               |
| <sup>22</sup> [...]                                  | [...]                                                                                  |
| <i>[n jmn-r<sup>c</sup> nb nswt] t3wy m jw n jmn</i> | [of Amun-Ra Lord of the thrones] of the two lands, in the Island of Amun (El-Balamun), |
| <i>n hwt-hr nbt k3[p]n</i>                           | of Hathor, Lady of By[b]los,                                                           |
| <i>n jmn [...]</i>                                   | of Amun [...]                                                                          |
| <sup>23</sup> [...]                                  | [...]                                                                                  |

The description of these building activities comes after the mention of a campaign in Takhsi in Syria. This order is not necessarily chronological but could be thematic and/or hierarchical, as in other biographical texts of the time.<sup>7</sup> The name of Byblos is partially damaged, but still easily recognizable. Wimmer (1990, 1090) observes that the temples are organised from south to north. If this principle was maintained throughout, the last temple, whose location is lost in a lacuna, should have been north of Byblos, in northern Lebanon or western Syria. Sumur, Qadesh, or Qatna, for example, are good candidates, although no evidence of a temple of Thutmose III has been found in any of these cities. This south–north order may have been the main list’s structuring device, although possibly with exceptions: Helck (1971, 444) and Wimmer (1990, 1091; Wimmer 1998, 102), in particular, have suggested identifying the last temple

7 Such as the biography of Amenemheb in Theban Tomb 85 (see e.g., di Biase-Dyson 2015, with references).

with that of Amun at Gaza in Palestine, as it is the only known shrine of this kind in the Levant for this period.

The existence in Byblos of a temple or chapel sponsored by Thutmose III is archaeologically confirmed by two blocks found during the excavations of the city (see §3.5 above). Although it is virtually impossible to prove, I think it likely that these blocks belong to the same building mentioned by Minmose. Otherwise, one should assume the presence of at least two different buildings sponsored by this same king, which although not impossible, would certainly not be the most economical interpretation.

The presence of an Egyptian cultic building suggests that, at the time, Byblos was under stable Egyptian domination. Moreover, temples played a fundamental role as centres of power and collection points of regional revenues (Janssen 1979; Singer 1988, 5; Bleiberg 1988; Cole 2004, 93–97 with references). The temple in Byblos could have had a similar function, and the city itself could have acted as an administrative centre for these remote areas under Egyptian influence. The statue of Djehuty discussed in §3.5 could support this idea.

### 1.3 *Biography of Sennefri*

The tomb of Sennefri has been explored and studied by the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge. The first volume of the final report has been published recently (Strudwick 2016a), while various preliminary reports have been presented in the past years (Leclant and Clerc 1994; 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; Strudwick 2000; Leclant and Clerc 2001; Strudwick 2001; 2005). Finally, Kurt Sethe's 1906 publication is also relevant as it contains an early transcription of the text.

Sennefri is a well-attested official of the reign of Thutmose III (see e.g., Eichler 1998, 217–18; Strudwick 2000, 243–44). His primary title was “overseer of sealbearers” (*jmy-r3 ḥtmtjw*), as was usual for expedition leaders. This title, however, does not appear in preserved parts of the very fragmentary tomb biography, where only “count” (*ḥ3ty-ʿ*) is present. Sennefri was probably not from Thebes, as is possibly implied by a mention of the estate *w3tt-ḥr*  on a statue in the British Museum (*Urk.* IV 547:4). The location of *w3tt-ḥr* is not precisely known, but it should be somewhere in the Delta or on the Ways of Horus across the northern Sinai. Sennefri is mentioned in connection with an economic transaction recorded in Pap. Louvre E3226 and dated to year 32 of Thutmose III (Eichler 1998, 217–18). A shrine at Gebel El-Silsila bears his name in association with the cartouche of Hatshepsut, but his name there could be a later addition (Helck 1981).

The passage of the biography relevant here describes an expedition led by Sennefri to Byblos in order to obtain wood for flagpoles, probably for the

temple of Amun in Karnak. Although the text is essentially biographical, it is clearly distinguished from the main biography in the tomb, as appears from their respective locations: the latter is inscribed on the south-western wall of the chapel (no. 12 fig. 5.1), while the text narrating the Byblos expedition is on the north-western and north-eastern walls of the hall (nos. 3 and 4 respectively

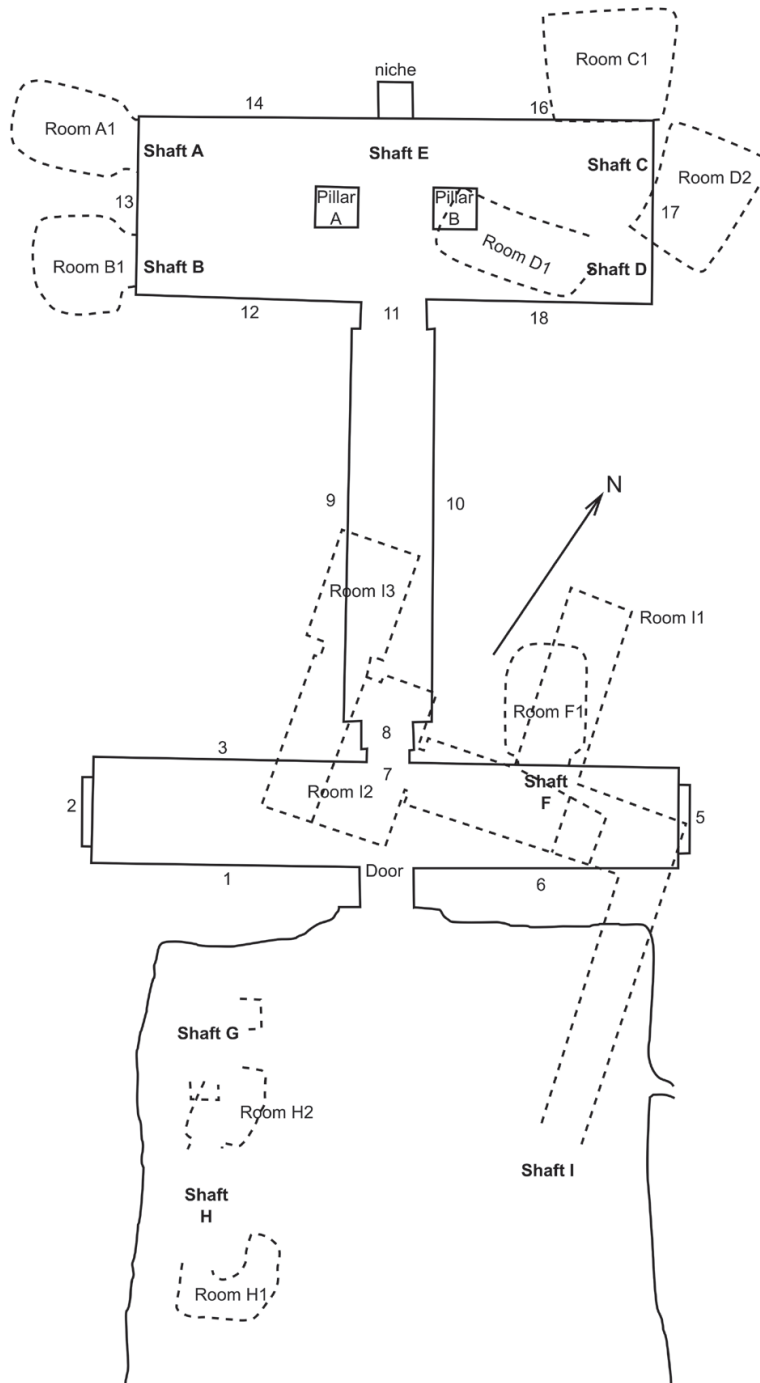


FIGURE 5.1 Tomb TT99 (Sennefri)

DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR ACCORDING TO STRUDWICK  
2000, 242



of fig. 5.1). This is where representations of the king are usually found (Eichler 1998, 217, 223; see further below).

The text of the expedition to Byblos is divided into four parts, two written on the wall to the right of the door leading towards the inner part of the chapel (passages A, *Urk.* IV 532:12–15 and B *Urk.* IV 533:1–534:3, Strudwick 2016b), and two on the left (passages C, *Urk.* IV 534:11–535:16 and D *Urk.* IV 536:2–4, Strudwick 2016b, 100–5, figs. 88–90, pls. 28A, 29, colour pl. 16).

Passages A and B are too fragmentary to suggest a continuous translation. The only remarkable feature of the very short surviving fragments of text A is a possible mention of *hnty*[-š], “Khenty-she,” a name used to refer to Lebanon (line 1). The “noble [slopes of š- trees]” are perhaps mentioned in line 2. This part of the biography possibly described the appointment of Sennefri as leader of the expedition (Eichler 1998, 216). Text B, of which more fragments survive, consists instead of a eulogy of the king, possibly Sennefri’s answer to the appointment (Eichler 1998, 216). Text C is more relevant to the present research, as it deals with the expedition to Byblos itself. In this case, slightly longer fragments are preserved, and a translation can thus be suggested:<sup>8</sup>

### Passage C

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> <i>jst jn jry-p’t h3ty-‘htmty bjty [smr w’ty sn-nfrj jww m htp<sup>a</sup> ...</i> | Now, the Prince, the Count, the Seal-bearer of the <i>bjty</i> , [the unique friend, Sennefri, came in peace ... |
| <i>... sqd~n=f m w3d-w]r<sup>b</sup></i>                                                        | ... he sailed the se]a                                                                                           |
| <sup>2</sup> <i>s[3h~n=f t3</i>                                                                 | and r[eached the land ...                                                                                        |
| <sup>3</sup> ... <sup>4</sup> ... <sup>5</sup> ...                                              | ...                                                                                                              |
| <i>...hp]r<sup>6</sup> m b(w) [h]r=j</i>                                                        | ... happe]ned in the place [wher]e I was,                                                                        |
| <i>hđ hr [n mš=j ...</i>                                                                        | and [my army] was happy <sup>c</sup> [...                                                                        |
| <i>...jw]7=j šm=kwj h[r ...]=j đw p[n ...</i>                                                   | ...] I went with/under [...] this [...] of mine [...                                                             |
| <i>...]8 hr-tp šnyt</i>                                                                         | ...] on top of/above a storm                                                                                     |
| <i>jw=j ‘q=kwj r hn[ty-š ...</i>                                                                | I entered into Khen[ty-she (Lebanon/forest)                                                                      |
| ...                                                                                             | ...                                                                                                              |
| <i>... rdj~n=j]9 m3‘ n=s wdn m hđ m ht hr-</i>                                                  | I caused] to present her offerings consisting of millions of                                                     |

<sup>8</sup> All restorations within square brackets are Sethe’s unless otherwise stated.

|                                                                                           |                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>tp</i> [ <i>nh wd3 snb hm=k</i> <sup>d</sup> ...                                       | things on behalf of [the life, prosperity and health of Your Majesty ...  |
| ...] <sup>10</sup> <i>mm</i> <sup>e</sup> <i>k3pn</i> [ <i>y</i> ] <i>dj st n hrw=s n</i> | ...] in Byblo[s]. They were given to                                      |
| <i>st-[jb]=s</i>                                                                          | her Horus, <sup>f</sup> for her satisfa[ction]                            |
| <i>rdj</i> [...] <sup>11</sup> <i>m stpw jry</i>                                          | gave/caused [...] of the finest                                           |
|                                                                                           | thereof,                                                                  |
| <i>jn~n=j mh</i> [6] <i>o m 3[w=sn</i> ...                                                | (which?) I brought, [6]o cubits in                                        |
| ...]                                                                                      | [their] len[gh ...                                                        |
| <sup>12</sup> <i>spd st r wšm</i>                                                         | ...] they were sharper than (the prickles on) ears of grain, <sup>g</sup> |
| <i>hr(y)-tp jr</i> [ <i>y</i> ] <i>w[mt r</i> ...                                         | the upper part there[of] thick[er than ...                                |
| ... <i>sh3~n</i> ] <sup>13</sup> = <i>j st hr h3st nw t3-ntr</i>                          | ...] I [brought] them [down] on/                                          |
| <i>spr(w) r r3-<sup>c</sup>h hnty-š</i>                                                   | from the mountains of God's Land.                                         |
| [... <i>3tp r 'h<sup>c</sup>w</i> ... <sup>i</sup>                                        | (They) arrived at the limit of                                            |
| ... <i>sqd~n=j m w3d</i> ] <sup>14</sup> - <i>wr m m3<sup>c</sup>w nfrw</i>               | Khenty-she (Lebanon/forest)                                               |
|                                                                                           | [... loaded on the ships ...]                                             |
| <i>hr s3h</i> [t3 ...]                                                                    | ... I sailed in] the [se]a with a good                                    |
|                                                                                           | wind                                                                      |
|                                                                                           | reaching [land ...]                                                       |

- The sequence of titles is that suggested by Sethe (1906, 359; *Urk.* IV 354:11).
- Following Sethe (1906, 359; *Urk.* IV 354:12). His suggestion is based on only very few traces, but it is followed by Strudwick 2016b, 101.
- Following Strudwick 2016b, 101. Montet (1928, 310) reported that N. de Garis Davies, who visited the tomb around 1928, read this line as *jw=j šm=kwy hns (?) mš<sup>c</sup>=j dw pn*. Montet rendered "J'allai et mes soldats parcoururent cette montagne." If this is correct, it would imply that Egyptian soldiers were involved in Sennefri's activities. This would agree with what emerges from other sources (see §5.2.1, §5.2.5.1).
- See Gardiner 1957, §178.
-  could be the preposition *mm*, or an Eighteenth Dynasty variant of *jm* "there" (Gardiner 1957, §205). The preposition is rarely attested in the New Kingdom with place names as a (possibly erroneous?) variant of the preposition *m* and *jm=* (Wb. II.2). Therefore, it is not impossible that it could refer to Byblos.
- This passage, which includes the only surviving explicit mention of Byblos in the text, is difficult to interpret. An initial problem lies in its structure. Sethe (1906, 360) divided it into two sentences, the first ending with *mm*, "there," and the second starting with *k3pn*[*y*], "Byblos." Eichler (1998) and Strudwick (2016, 101) follow Sethe here. Redford (2003, 175) takes it as a single sentence and he considers *k3pn*[*y*], "Byblos" to be in apposition to *m-m*. Other problems emerge in the remaining part of the sentence. Sethe translated "Byblos hat sie (plur.) gegeben seinem Lieblingshorus (dem König)," while Redford suggests the translation "... therein, (viz.) Byblos, who had given herself to her Lord voluntarily," which however is difficult to explain. Sethe took Byblos as the subject of the verb *dj*, although

it is not clear to me which verbal form he is implying. *dj* could be a participle: “Byblos, which gives ...,” or “It is Byblos which gives” without the normal *jn* before “Byblos” (see Gardiner 1957, §227, d; §373; compare also Gebel Barkal stele, §5.2.1). Another possibility is to take *dj* as a participle referring to something lost in the lacuna rather than to Byblos. Such a participle could be feminine, since the final *t* is quite often omitted in this period, and could refer to the same feminine entity as the following suffix pronouns. The possessor “her” cannot be Byblos, because *k3pny* is masculine. The simplest assumption is that these pronouns refer to the Lady of Byblos, the goddess of the city, who is mentioned in the inscription of Minmose (see §5.2.2) and in the Gebel Barkal stele (see §5.2.1; and see below). The pronoun *st* raises another problem. *st* could be either a 3 pl. (Sethe) or a 3 sg. fem. (Redford) dependent pronoun. If 3 pl., it probably refers to the “flagpoles.” If 3 sg. fem., it probably refers to the local goddess. If the *dj* is a participle or an active verb form, *st* is its direct object. Finally, another possibility is to split the passage into two sentences, but after Byblos, rather than before it. In this case, *dj* could be a passive participle and the predicate of an adjectival sentence, and *st* would be the subject: “They were given ...” or conceivably “She was given ...”

To sum up, I see the following options as the most likely possible translations for this fragment:

- 1) ... there. Byblos, which gave them/her to her Horus ...
- 2) ... there, (viz.) Byblos, which (i.e., Byblos) gave them/her to her Horus ...
- 3) ... therein, (viz.) Byblos, who (referring to a “her” lost in the lacuna) gave them/her(self ?) to her Horus ...
- 4) ... therein, (viz.) Byblos / ... in Byblos. They were given to her Horus ... I think 4) makes most sense in context.
- g. Strudwick (2016, 102, n.p.) suggests that this expression could mean “they being of the highest quality” or alternatively he thinks it could perhaps be a reference to the needle-like foliage of the Lebanese conifers.
- h. Strudwick (2016, 102) reads  $\overline{\text{sm}}$  for  $\overline{\text{sm}}$ .
- i. Sethe’s reconstruction, which is followed by all other authors, is reasonable.

Passage D is again too short and fragmentary to offer a continuous translation. Among the few words that can be read, there seems to be a mention of “flagpoles” (*snwt*, line 1), of the “Ennead” (*psdt*, line 3) and of “presented (goods)” (*m3’w=sn*, line 4).

Overall, the very fragmentary biographical text was relatively long, consisting of at least 5 + 15 + 14 + 4 columns. Its general meaning, main elements, and structure can be glimpsed. The inscription describes a royal expedition to Byblos in search of wood for flagpoles for the temple of Amun in Karnak. Although the name of the temple is not preserved, the poles were probably destined for it (Eichler 1998, 222; Redford 2003, 175; Shirley 2011, 302, n. 56), and Eichler in particular (1998, 222) observes that some of Sennefri’s titles appear to be related to Amun (Eichler 1998, 222). The “flagpoles,” *snw(t)*, appear in one of the last fragments of the text (D.1; *Urk.* IV 536:2), and the earlier allusion to something *mḥ* [6] *o m 3’[w=sn*, “[6] *o* cubits long” (ca. 31 metres: C.11; *Urk.* IV 535:8) confirms that these were the primary reason for Sennefri’s travel.

In line C.8 (*Urk.* IV 535:2) there is a mention of “on top of a/the storm” (*hr tp šnyt*). This might indicate that the Egyptians met bad weather on their way to Lebanon. Redford (2003, 175) suggests it could allude to Sennefri undertaking this journey in winter,<sup>9</sup> drawing a parallel with the *Tale of Wenamun*, although he also raises the possibility that the preceding lacuna hides a mythological reference to Ba‘al “cloud rider.” Strudwick (2016, 101–2) suggests that this mention of storm or clouds could refer to the heights of Mount Lebanon, from where the wood came. The fragmentary state of the text makes it difficult to reach any firm conclusion. As stated at the end of section C, Sennefri successfully returned to Egypt with his precious cargo. Redford (2003, 175) suggests that the expedition, which is not dated, took place after year 33, possibly in relation with the works on and around the seventh pylon, which he argues (2003, 125, 175) must be dated to years 33–34. This expedition is probably the one mentioned by Thutmose III in his Gebel Barkal stele, which also treats flagpoles from Lebanon (lines 44–50, *Urk.* IV 1241:13, §5.2.1).

A further relevant detail is the use of feminine pronouns (fragment C, lines 9–10) that probably refer to Hathor Lady of Byblos (see note g to text C). The goddess is also mentioned in Minmose’s inscription and in the Gebel Barkal stele (§5.2.2 and §5.2.1). Her presence in all these texts underscores her centrality in the relationship between Egypt and Byblos. It seems that Sennefri, having arrived in Lebanon, gave offerings to the local goddess before obtaining the wood. The same pattern is attested in Hatshepsut’s expedition to Punt (Liverani 1990b, 248–49; Liverani 2001, 168–70; see also Harvey 2003, 88; §5.2.5.2 below).

Another connection with the reign of Hatshepsut can be noticed in the structure of Sennefri’s text. Four distinct parts can be recognised: a first section with title and introduction, a presentation of the royal commission, acclamations and support from the court, and finally a part describing the execution of the king’s orders and the successful result. Eichler (1998, 222–28) observes that this structure is unusual for a biographical text, and that it can rather be compared to that of the *Königsnovelle*,<sup>10</sup> and in particular with Hatshepsut’s account of her expedition to Punt. These intertextual references and the role of the Lady of Byblos are significant for the present research

9 That trees could have been felled in winter has been suggested also by Semaan (2015, 101), as this would have allowed to use the rivers, enriched with the water of melting snow, to float the logs down to the coast during spring.

10 See Hermann 1938. A literary genre attested at least since the Middle Kingdom or even before and common in New Kingdom official and royal texts (Loprieno 1996; Spalinger 2011).

and are discussed in more detail below (see §5.2.5.2, 5.2.5.3; see also §6.5.0.1 and §6.5.0.2).

More broadly, this text highlights the religious importance of Byblos during the early Eighteenth Dynasty, as was noted above (§5.2.2) regarding the temple mentioned by Minmose. This is confirmed by the passage C.13, which describes the region of Byblos as a *t3-ntr* “God’s Land,” a designation also used in the Gebel Barkal stele (see §5.2.1). Furthermore, to lead an expedition to Byblos was a deed worthy of being recorded in private biographies since the Old Kingdom (Diego Espinel 2002; Marcolin 2010; Marcolin and Diego Espinel 2011), and as Eichler notes (1998, 217), Sennefri’s account is displayed in the most prestigious and visible part of his tomb (Hartwig 2004, 15–19).

Bryan (2006, 81) suggests that the commercial revenue of the expedition was what made it worth recording in Sennefri’s tomb. However, during the reign of Thutmose III Byblos was under stable Egyptian control. A straightforward commercial trip to the city was likely not an extraordinary accomplishment, as trading interactions with Byblos and other cities of the region were probably flourishing at the time (see §5.2.5).

Rather, it is possible that the primary ideological motivation for the prestige associated by kings and elites to Byblos should be searched for in the religious aura surrounding the city, instead than in its commercial resources. In this perspective, in view of the centrality of the search for temple flagpoles and the reference to the *t3-ntr*, the “God’s Land,” Sennefri’s text should be read, first of all, as a celebration of the religious service he performed for the “living God Thutmose III” in obtaining wood for Amun from the land of Hathor, Lady of Byblos. As I discuss later (§6.5), a comparison with sources from different periods allows us to specify the characteristics of this religio-ideological framework, and of its effects on Byblos.

Finally, a few very fragmentary scenes are associated with the biographical text. On wall 4, two registers are visible. In the top one, a series of Egyptian soldiers carrying bows and axes precede some horses and chariots (Strudwick 2016b, 102–4, colour pl. 16B). In the lower register, instead, some Asiatic and Egyptian men are pulling something using ropes (Strudwick 2016b, 104–5, colour pl. 17A). The remaining part of the scene is lost, but it is likely that we have here a representation of the dragging of the logs from the mountains of Lebanon described in the biography. Similarly, the first register probably represents the soldiers of Sennefri’s expedition. The top of a Levantine city or fortress with Asiatics on its walls raising their arms in a gesture of adoration is instead recognizable in the surviving fragments of wall 5 (Strudwick 2016b, 106–7, colour pl. 17B). It would be tempting to see in this scene a representation of Byblos, as that is the only city mentioned in the biography, but its state is



too fragmentary for any conclusive identification. The scene, however, is likely related to Sennefri's expedition, and as discussed below, it could also be connected both with the timbering activities mentioned in the Gebel Barkal stele and with a scene in TT42, the tomb of Amenmose, a contemporary of Sennefri (§5.2.5.1).

#### 1.4 *Tomb TT143*

Little can be said about the mention of Byblos in this Theban tomb in Dra Abu El-Naga (TT143), whose owner's name is lost (Fleming 2012).

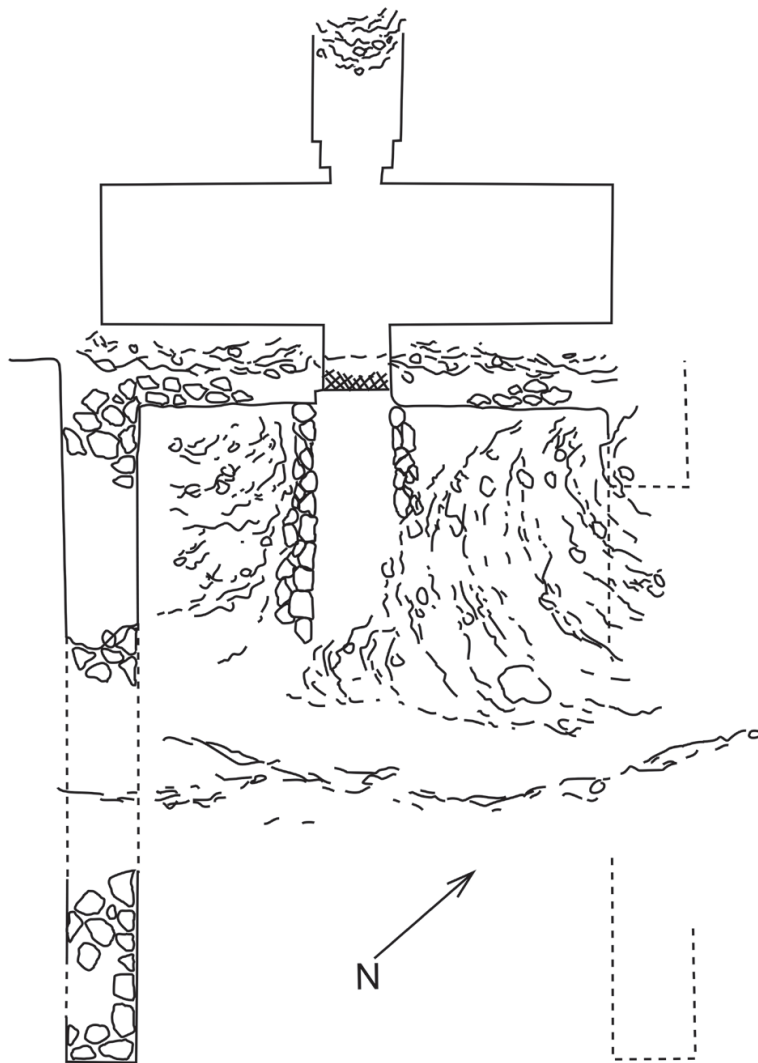


FIGURE 5.2 Tomb TT143

DRAWING BY THE AUTHOR ACCORDING TO KAMPP  
1996, 429

The tomb probably dates to the reign of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II (Fleming 2012). The name of Byblos occurs in a very fragmentary caption on the north-west wall of the transverse hall (fig. 5.2), where the scenes show the arrival in Egypt of ships bringing goods from Punt (PM I, 255–57). The fragment mentioning Byblos (*Urk.* IV 1472:15–16) runs as follows:

...] *wdn ht [nfrt w'bt ...] mw (?) m-ht spr jmw n k3p[ny]*

...] offering of [good and pure ...] things, [...] water (?) after the arrival of the ships of Bybl[os].

The remaining fragments of texts and paintings show that the context is the return of an expedition to Punt. The expression *jmw n k3p[ny]* is noteworthy. “Byblos-style” ships are well attested in the Egyptian sources, and were referred to with the technical term *kbnt*, which is first attested in the Old Kingdom and derives from *kbn*, the name of Byblos. The term *kbnt* may originally have indicated ships from Byblos or ships trading on the route to Byblos, but later it seems to have assumed a more general meaning, indicating a kind of (cargo?) ship (Montet 1954; Darnell 1992; Bradbury 1996). *Kbnt* is thus a “Byblos-style” ship, not necessarily a “Byblian ship.” Such ships are attested in trade with Punt, and at a first glance, the caption from the tomb TT143 could be understood in this way, as Louise Bradbury does (1996). The text, however, reads *jmw n k3p[ny]*, “ships of Byblos,”<sup>11</sup> presumably indicating that the ships are from Byblos, rather than of the *kbnt*, i.e., “Byblian,” type. If this is the correct interpretation, the present caption may be a unique attestation of Byblian involvement in Egyptian ventures on the Red Sea, and may suggest that collaborations between Egyptians and northern Levantine sailors took place during the reign of Thutmose III.

Such a possibility is not unreasonable, as Levantine artisans were probably present in the Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian shipyards of Peru-Nefer (Zayed 1987, 107–8). Moreover, Iron Age sources provides additional attestations of similar collaborations: the Bible mentions Phoenician sailors from Tyre being employed by king Solomon for an expedition in the Red Sea to Ophir (1 Kings 9:26–27); while the later *Tale of Wenamun* suggests that Levantine captains were employed by the Egyptians, or at least that Egyptian envoys could fare on ships with Levantine captains (Schipper 2005, 62–63, *Wen.* 1:54–55). Finally,

11 This could also mean “for Byblos” (as suggested by Baines, personal communication), but considering that these ships are clearly related to Punt, such a translation would be difficult to explain.

even Herodotus states that the Twenty-sixth Dynasty king Necho contracted Phoenician crews to sail the Red Sea and circumnavigate Africa (Mauny 1976; Moje 2003), although this could just be one of the many unfounded legends he recorded.

### 1.5 *Discussion*

In the sources just discussed, Byblos is always mentioned in relation to royal or official activities. No written sources provide information about Byblos's social and political structure, its ordinary trades, or any other non-royal aspect of the city. Some elements can, however, be inferred from the texts; they are presented here and in §6, where they are discussed along with written and non-written sources from other periods.

Three main aspects emerge from the sources of the time of Thutmose III: the strategic role of the city, the crucial importance of the Temple of the Lady of Byblos, and the religious and ideological frame influencing the Egyptian perception of and relation with Byblos. They are discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 1.5.1 Geopolitical Setting and Strategic Role

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt entered an expansionist phase that led it to clash with Mitanni for the control of the northern Levant. The apex of this conflict was reached at the time of Thutmose III, who fought at least eleven campaigns in the Levant (Redford 2003, with references) and established the basis of a stable Egyptian supremacy in the area.

It is clear that Byblos played an important strategic role in Thutmose III's military activities, but the details of such interaction need discussion. A first question is how Byblos was incorporated into Egypt's possessions. Did the city voluntarily ally or submit itself to Egypt, perhaps in the name of past close connections, or was it conquered? There is no mention of a conquest of Byblos in the Annals of Thutmose III, and the city does not appear in the related topographical list (Simons 1937, 109–22; Rainey 1982), which may record the territories conquered by the king. Byblos is not the only city that is absent from that list: none of the centres of the southern Lebanese coast is mentioned there or in the Annals. This absence is noteworthy, especially since the conquest of coastal cities a little north of Byblos such as Ullassa, Sumur, and Arwad is indeed recorded.<sup>12</sup> One explanation for this distinction could be that the centres of the southern Lebanese coast were too small and politically irrelevant,

<sup>12</sup> Annals: Ullassa: *Urk.* IV 690:17, and probably 985:8 (see §5.2.1); Sumur: *Urk.* IV 689:13; Arwad: *Urk.* IV 687:5, *Urk.* IV 689:14. The names of Ullassa and Arwad may appear in

at least from an Egyptian perspective, to appear in the texts of Thutmose III. While this could perhaps be argued for cities like Beirut, Sidon, or Tyre, which are hardly ever mentioned in Egyptian sources from before the Nineteenth Dynasty (Gauthier 1925–1931, I 25, VI 106–7, VI 113; Ben-Tor 2006), this explanation does not apply to Byblos. In view of the city's prominence in Thutmose III's other sources, one would expect any military conquest to be mentioned in the Annals as well as perhaps in other official inscriptions. This, however, is not the case.

An alternative possibility is that these cities were not conquered, but peacefully incorporated into the nascent Egyptian empire. Some clues do suggest that the Lebanese coastal towns were not just ordinary conquered vassal territories, but rather were bound to Egypt by diplomatic treaties or comparable agreements. Firstly, as already mentioned (§5.2.1), the Annals record that some Levantine “harbours” (*mnjwṯ*: – *Urk.* IV 700:6–9 and *passim* – see §5.2.1) were supplied and the *b3k*-contributions of Lebanon (*b3k nr3mnn*) were delivered “according to their yearly *nt-ʿ*” (*mj nt-ʿ=sn n tnw rnpt*). In addition, an inscription of Thutmose III on an obelisk by the seventh pylon<sup>13</sup> describes the god Amun as: [*r*]*dj n[t]-ʿm t3w m-t-n š3 r š*ʿ, “who [est]ablishes *n[t]-ʿ* in the land of Mitanni more numerous than sand” (*Urk.* IV 589).

According to Routledge (2001, 329–31), who studied the *nt-ʿ* within the frame of ritual practice, this term refers to lists of ritual or legal duties with a customary basis, characterised by their written form and by a certain periodicity and formality. The term can thus refer to various kinds of documents defining duties, and in an international context it assumes the meaning of “written diplomatic treaty.” This secondary meaning developing in diplomatic contexts is easy to understand: a treaty is a written document defining a series of commonly and formally agreed obligations.<sup>14</sup> This is evident from the Peace Treaty between Ramses II and Hattushili III, where *nt-ʿ* is used not only to refer to the document itself but also as a translation of Akkadian *rikiltu* “treaty,” “agreement” in a more general sense (*CAD*, 14.345–46; Edel 1997, 22–23 §3.7, 88–89; Murnane 1990, 73–74). Routledge argues that these *nt-ʿ* must have been incorporated in written documents defining a series of reciprocal duties between Egypt and the Lebanese cities, such as paying the *b3k*-contributions or

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Thutmose III's topographical list, at nos. 123 and 175 (*Urk.* IV 788:8; *Urk.* IV 789:14 – see Simons 1937, 119, 120; Rainey 1982).

13 Probably the twin of the obelisk in Istanbul. See *Urk.* IV 589, Barguet 1962, 270; Habachi 1978, 147; Redford 2003, 124.

14 Or, more precisely, a “list of the duties stipulated through a diplomatic agreement” i.e., it is possible that the term *nt-ʿ* refers to the content of the treaty, and not to the treaty itself. This, however, is rather a philological or even philosophical distinction.

supplying the harbours, as mentioned in the passages of the *Annals* discussed here (see also §5.2.1). While the sources do not show whether they were indeed conceived and perceived as formal diplomatic treaties, there are grounds to support this possibility.

The use of messengers in relations with foreign political entities is attested in Egypt at least as early as the time of Senuseret III (cf. the Semna stele of year 8, 4–5, see Obsomer 1989, 181–83), and this naturally implies that Egypt was involved in some form of international diplomatic relations even before the New Kingdom. Oral agreements were certainly part of them. Written agreements involving Egypt could have also existed, but the earliest clear evidence is later, and dates to the Eighteenth Dynasty (Weeks 2004, 99). In particular, the strongest and earliest surviving evidence is the “Kurustama treaty” between Egypt and Hatti. This treaty is preserved only in very fragmentary tablets found in Hattusha (Laroche 1971, *CTH* 134), but two later texts mentioning it help in reconstructing its content and context.<sup>15</sup> The tablets of the treaty probably contained two distinct but related documents. The first appears only on the obverse of the preserved tablets (Sürenhagen 2006, 64) and seems to deal with regulations or orders addressed to the people of Kurustama concerning their displacement from Hittite into Egyptian territory. The second document, written only on the reverse of the tablets, seems to be a diplomatic treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites. The tablets are certainly copies of earlier ones, and although the two documents appear together, they have likely been composed in slightly different periods. In particular, the agreement about the displacement of the Kurustama people must have preceded the treaty, because the treaty mentions the agreement as a positive antecedent (Sürenhagen 2006, 65). The surviving parts of the treaty do not include names of kings. However, given its antiquity, demonstrated by the archaic nature of its language, Itamar Singer suggested that the Hittite king may have been Tudhaliya I (Singer 2004, 604). As for the Egyptian Pharaoh, Singer thought it could have been Amenhotep II or perhaps Thutmose III, as argued also by Breyer (2010). Whichever of the two it was, these agreements show that the Pharaohs of the time were indeed using treaties as political and diplomatic tools. Therefore, since Egypt was entering into such agreements with the Hittites and the rulers of Mitanni at the time of Amenhotep II or even during the last years of Thutmose III, it would be fair to assume that it could have signed some sorts of treaties or written agreements also with coastal Lebanese cities, and with

15 Mursili II’s “Second Plague Prayer” (Sürenhagen 2006, 60–61; text: Laroche 1971, *CTH* 378) and the posthumous edition of the “Deeds” of Hattushili III’s grandfather Suppiluliuma (Sürenhagen 2006, 61–62; text: Laroche 1971, *CTH* 40, fragm. E3 IV).



Byblos in particular.<sup>16</sup> This might explain why these cities do not appear in Thutmose III's topographical lists: they were not defeated enemies, but allies that sided with Egypt through the acceptance of agreed – not just imposed, at least formally – duties within a diplomatic frame.

Whether conquered or peacefully accepting vassalage, Byblos clearly played a crucial role in Thutmose III's military activities in the northern Levant. Its importance is particularly salient in the Gebel Barkal stele. Here we read that it is in the area of the city that the Pharaoh built boats later used during his campaign in Syria (§5.2.1).

Moreover, various clues seem to suggest the existence of an Egyptian *mnww* fortress somehow related to Byblos. Such a fortress is mentioned in the lines 45–46 of the Gebel Barkal stele (*Urk.* IV 1241:19, see §5.2.1). A fortress built “amid the chiefs of Lebanon” (*ḥr-jb n wrw nw r-m-n-n*) appears also in a passage of the Annals inscribed on the sixth pylon in Karnak (*Urk.* IV 739:15–740:1).

...] *ḥr ḥ3st rt̄nw m mn̄nw qdn ḥm=j m nḥtw=f ḥr-jb n wrw nw rmnn nty rn=f r wʿšm3 (mn-ḥpr-rʿ)|*

...] in/from the foreign land of Retenu, in the fortress that My Majesty built from (or “as”?) his achievement(s)<sup>17</sup> among the chiefs of Lebanon, whose name is “Menkheperre-is-conqueror-of-the-land<sup>18</sup>-of-the-vagabonds.”

A fortress or a fortified city is also represented in the tomb of Sennefri (see §5.2.3). Finally, another Theban tomb, that of Amenmose (TT42), preserves an image of a fortress or fortified city in a forest in Lebanon, which the

16 It has to be noted, however, that the Kurustama treaty as well as later ones, such as those that Amenhotep II or Thutmose IV probably agreed upon with Mitanni (Bryan 2000b, 76–79), or that between Ramses II and Hattushili III (see Edel 1997; Kitchen and Lawrence 2012, i 573–94, no. 71, ii 57–60, with references.) were treaties between equals, while any agreement between Egypt and a Levantine city would have been conceptually somehow different, as it would have implied a superior–inferior relation.

The way these relations were formalised is not clear, and it has been suggested (e.g., Weeks 2004, 103–9) that only oaths, but no treaty, were involved. Even in the case this were true as a general rule, the ancient close links of Egypt with Byblos and the Lebanese coast in general could have granted them some exceptional status, and therefore some exceptional agreement. For a discussion of the nature and form of the relation between the Pharaoh and its Levantine vassals in the Amarna Age, and for the possible existence of formal vassal treaties, see Liverani 1979c, esp. 5; Moran 1985; Zaccagnini 1990, 51; Moran 1995; Murnane 2000, 104–5; Weeks 2004, 103–9.

17 See Galán 1995, 41–100, esp. 51–53, 93–100.

18 The sign  suggests that the name refers to the “land” of the vagabonds.

fragmentary caption seems to associate with the land of Negau, in the area of Byblos (Montet 1923): only the words [*jmn*]*ms* [*n*]*g3w* “[Amen]mose [N]egau” and *wrw n rmnn* “chiefs of Lebanon” survive (de Garis Davies and de Garis Davies 1933, 30–31, pl. 36).

Although no name for this stronghold is given in the Gebel Barkal stele, it is likely that all these mentions refer to the same facility (so Morris 2005, 137, 809). In addition, according to the Gebel Barkal stele (*Urk.* IV 1241:11–1242:13; §5.2.1), the fortress was involved in procuring timber to send to the temple of Amun in Karnak.<sup>19</sup> As Morris points out (2005, 157), these activities are closely similar to those attributed to the garrison that, according to the Gebel Barkal stele, was located in Ullassa (*Urk.* IV 1237:9–1238:2, §5.2.1), which could suggest that the fortress and the garrison were related. This possibility seems to be supported by the image in the tomb of Sennefri,<sup>20</sup> which depicts some Egyptian soldiers taking part in timbering seemingly near a fortified city or, possibly, a *mnnw* fortress.<sup>21</sup>

Unless we assume that many Egyptian forces and fortifications existed in the same area, it is reasonable to think that all these attestations refer to a same single garrison linked with a same single fortress, as Morris suggests (2005, 809). The location of this fortress is uncertain. Among the various options that have been put forwards, Morris favours two. The first locates this stronghold in the city of Ullassa or nearby, the second in the area of Byblos or in the city itself (Morris 2005, 122, n. 31, 137–38, 154–57).<sup>22</sup> These two suggestions are based essentially on the texts discussed here. Morris also points out that Byblos had a long tradition of friendship with Egypt and would have welcomed an Egyptian military presence. Moreover, Thutmose III launched his eighth campaign against Mitanni from the territory of Byblos, which would have needed to be prepared accordingly. In addition, some Amarna letters (*EA* 117, 121, 122, 130) refer to the presence of a garrison in the territory of Byblos before the time of Amenhotep III, although the reliability of these allusions

19 Wood to be transformed into cultic objects, flagpoles, and divine barks.

20 Unpublished, but described in Shirley 2011, 302, n. 56; Strudwick 2000, 245–46. A Lebanese fortress or fortified city associated with Egyptian soldiers is also depicted in the tomb of Amenmose (de Garis Davies and de Garis Davies 1933, 30–31, pl. 36; see above). In that case there is no representation of timbering activities, but the fortress is depicted against the background of a forest.

21 According to Morris (2005, 814), *mnnw* should be considered *fortress-towns*, rather than isolated strongholds.

22 Others less convincingly suggested locating the fortress “inland at the southern end of Lebanon,” (Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 36), in the area of Sidon (Alt 1951, 134–35) or Tyre (Alt 1951, 134–35), in Sumur (Noth 1937, 168), or even farther south in Galilee (Yeivin 1934, 213). Redford (2003, 214–15) thinks either Tyre or Byblos.

is rather difficult to judge (see §5.4.3). Finally, Morris (2005, 254) thinks that Sennefri's offerings could also be understood as a sort of payment to install an Egyptian fortification in the area.

As for Ullassa, Morris (2005, 172) observes that some Amarna letters (*EA* 104, 105, 109, 117, 140) suggest that at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty the city was an Egyptian base (Morris 2005, 122; see also §5.4.5), while the Gebel Barkal stele states that the city hosted a garrison at the time of Thutmose III (Morris 2005, 138, 155). Finally, as discussed above, the image in the tomb of Sennefri and the involvement of both the fortress and the Ullassa garrison in timbering activities suggest that the two could be related. However, while the references in the Gebel Barkal stele seem to point to Ullassa, the representations in Sennefri's tomb are clearly associated with his biographical text and therefore point to Byblos.

This apparent clash in the evidence can perhaps be resolved by considering some additional sources and arguments. First, the statue of Djehuty deserves attention. As discussed in §3.5, it is possible that Djehuty was a commander of Thutmose III's army in the Levant, and the fact that his statue is dedicated to the Lady of Byblos may suggest that his administrative position was somehow related to and possibly even based in the city.

Another aspect to consider is that the fortress represented in the tomb of Sennefri may have been connected with his expedition. This point is significant when we consider that among the things that Sennefri obtained in Lebanon were flagpoles of š-wood for the temple of Amun.<sup>23</sup> The term š-wood may have had various meanings, and could have referred to generic "conifer wood" or "conifer trees" such as cedar, juniper or fir, depending on the context (Kilani 2016a with references). In the case of the flagpoles, however, there is no such ambiguity: as first pointed out by Loret (Loret 1916, 40–47) and others after him (e.g., Jacquemin 1933; Helck 1961, 241–307; Helck et al. 1972–1992, II 1266 and passim, Bardinet 2008, 330 and passim), the Cilician fir is the only tree growing in the region whose characteristics would match those of the flagpoles appearing in contemporary texts and representations.<sup>24</sup>

This is a crucial detail, because today the Cilician fir grows only in forests north of the Kadisha Valley, near the area of Tripoli and therefore near the

23 As appears from the Gebel Barkal stele, where the same flagpoles are described as coming from the "the slopes of š-wood on the hills [of] the God's Land [...]" in the Gebel Barkal stele (*Urk.* IV 1241:13–14, §5.2.1).

24 It is worth noting that some fragments of the poles have been found in the Temple of Karnak (Ducros 1903; Loret 1916, 42), but their location is no longer known and no analysis is thus possible.

probable site of Ullassa.<sup>25</sup> This was possibly also true in the past: although Lebanon went through extensive deforestation and it is thus difficult to estimate the original distribution of the different trees, the fact that the Cilician fir is common in the remaining cedar forests in Horsh Ehden and in general north of the Kadisha Valley but absent in the groves to the south may suggest that the valley is, and was also in the past, a natural boundary for the diffusion of the tree (Mikesell 1969; Awad et al. 2014, *passim*, fig. 1; Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 2016).

It thus appears that three distinct elements are associated with both Byblos and Ullassa: first, a fortress seems to be associated with both cities, second an Egyptian expedition claims to have fetched from Byblos flagpoles made of a wood that grows only further north, in the area of Ullassa, and third a garrison seems to be related both to the fortress and to timbering operations that, again, in some texts are associated with Byblos, in others with Ullassa.

I think that the simplest explanation of this pattern is that Ullassa was not an independent city but belonged in some way to the kingdom of Byblos. The fortress could have then been situated in Ullassa, which in turn was located within the Byblian kingdom and under the political authority of the city of Byblos, where Djehuty was possibly based. If Ullassa was under the authority of Byblos, its resources would have been as well. It would thus not be surprising that wood and in particular Cilician fir flagpoles fetched in the area of Ullassa were reciprocated with offerings to the Lady of Byblos, as suggested by Sennefri's biography (§5.2.3). Both Ullassa and its forests, being part of the kingdom of Byblos, would have belonged to the goddess of Byblos, and thus the offerings would have been her due.

Two passages of the Annals support this geopolitical scenario, as well as giving some clues as to its genesis and development. In *Urk.* IV 685:8–686:10 we read that in year 29 Thutmose III plundered Ullassa,<sup>26</sup> capturing its ruler and defeating a garrison from Tunip based there. The city, however, was soon lost

25 On the probable location of Ullassa near Tripoli see Goren, Finkelstein, et al. 2003, 5, n. 6 with references; Goren, Finkelstein, et al. 2004, *passim*; Rainey and Schniedewind 2015, *passim*.

26 The name of Ullassa is written in two slightly different ways in the Annals. Here it is written  $\text{𐎢𐎠𐎠𐎢𐎠}$ ,  $w\ddot{3}-r\ddot{3}-t'$ , or  $\text{𐎢𐎠𐎠𐎢𐎠𐎢𐎠}$ ,  $w\ddot{3}-r\ddot{3}-t'-t'$ , while in *Urk.* IV 690:17 it is written  $\text{𐎢𐎠𐎠𐎢𐎠𐎢𐎠}$ ,  $jwn-r\ddot{3}-t-w$ . Redford (2003, 64–65) wonders if these two spellings could refer to two different cities. Other texts, however, use yet other spellings (e.g., in the Gebel Barkal stele, *Urk.* IV 1237:15, we find  $\text{𐎢𐎠𐎠𐎢𐎠𐎢𐎠}$ ,  $w\ddot{3}-n-r\ddot{3}-t'-t'$ ). Unless we were to assume a multiplication of cities with very similar names, it is simplest to interpret these as orthographic variants referring to the same city, Ullassa. The presence of different spellings in the Annals could indicate that these two passages were written by different scribes or based on different sources.

and occupied by a new army from the Syrian city of Tunip, so that Thutmose III had to recapture it in year 31 (*Urk.* IV 690:17–691:8). These passages show that Ullassa was a strategic city that originally sided with, or was occupied by, Tunip against the Egyptians. They also show that at least until Thutmose III's year 29, Ullassa was an independent city with its own ruler, most likely opposed to Byblos in view of its links with Tunip. This situation changed in year 29, when the Egyptians conquered Ullassa for the first time, capturing its ruler and probably deporting him to Egypt, since he is listed among the plunder brought from the town (*Urk.* IV 686:4). This detail is noteworthy, as the usual Egyptian practice seems to have been to ask local rulers to pronounce an oath of submission, after which they were reinstalled. This is what happened, for instance, to the king of Megiddo during the first campaign: after the capitulation of the city, the Pharaoh received him and his allies, asked them to swear an oath of loyalty, and sent them back to their cities (Redford 2003, 34, 109–10, 199–200). The loyalty of the reinstalled rulers could be reinforced by taking their children and kin as hostages as a guarantee against rebellions. Once in Egypt, they would have been educated and prepared to be reinstalled in their cities as loyal vassals when a ruler died. This practice is attested for the campaign of year 30 (see Redford 2003, 69–71). In the case of Ullassa there is no evidence either for the reinstatement of the old ruler or for the appointment of a new one after year 29. Moreover, no ruler, but only a “commander [of the vile army(?)] of the son of the doomed one of Tunip” is mentioned when the Egyptians attacked the city again in year 31 (*Urk.* IV 691:3, see also Redford 2003, 71). So if the Egyptians removed the old ruler of the city and did not appoint a new one, who was in charge in the meantime? The Egyptians would hardly have allowed Ullassa to choose its own ruler, especially since it was on the northern border of their newly acquired territories. More likely, Ullassa was administered by Egyptian officials or was handed over to a loyal vassal. Byblos would have been the most obvious candidate.

The presence of an Egyptian garrison based in Ullassa (*Urk.* IV 1237:15, §5.2.1) suggests the presence of some Egyptian administration in the city. Therefore, the first option seems preferable. However, as convincingly argued (e.g., Pintore 1972; Pintore 1973; Frandsen 1979, 174–80; Liverani 1990b, *passim*; Murnane 2000, 103–4; Morris 2005, *passim*), the Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian administration in the Levant probably relied heavily on the support of local rulers. This must have been especially true at the beginning of the imperial expansion under Thutmose III, when the Egyptians were invaders without any solid support in the region. Thus, the Egyptian garrison may have been in charge of Ullassa, but relied on the support of Byblos and acted within the organisational frame of its kingdom.



Such an arrangement would have been convenient for everyone. Allowing or encouraging Byblos to extend its political influence northwards to the area of Ullassa and its resources (forest, agricultural land, and sea coast, including harbours) could have been a reward, almost a payment, for its loyalty and active strategic support during the campaigns of Thutmose III. The link existing between Ullassa and Tunip, at the time at war with the Pharaoh, would have raised apprehension in Egypt, and the loyal rulers of Byblos could have appeared as perfect overseers for those crucial northern territories.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, keeping a garrison and a fortress in the freshly captured Ullassa would have enabled the Egyptians to guard their northern border and consolidate their grasp on a region that was evidently prone to changing allegiance, while relying on Byblos for some support would have meant that the burden of the everyday administration was delegated to the local ally.

The Egyptian garrison may have been moved to Ullassa after year 29, when the city was first conquered, and again before Sennefri's expedition, which may have been in year 33 or 34 (Redford 2003, 125, 175; §5.2.3). Perhaps the ships that Thutmose III commissioned during his eighth campaign (year 33) in the "God's Land in the neighbourhood of the Lady of Byblos" (*Urk.* IV 1232:2–3) were constructed in the area of Ullassa. Those ships were placed on carts and brought by land to Syria, and Ullassa's location, not far from the Akkar plain and the Eleutheros valley, was a much better starting point for such an expedition than Byblos's. If this was the case, the garrison would have been there by year 33.

The events of year 31, when the city was conquered for the second time (*Urk.* IV 690:17–691:8), can be interpreted in two ways. If the Egyptians installed a garrison in Ullassa in year 29, that garrison was defeated and expelled during the following year. Ways in which this could have happened include a direct attack by an outside force or a popular rebellion, perhaps with outside support. Tunip was probably involved in these events, supporting or even fomenting such revolts, as it had a garrison or at least some troops in Ullassa both when the Egyptians captured the city in year 29 and in year 31 (*Urk.* IV 686:3 and 691:3 respectively). Alternatively, the Egyptian garrison may have been established

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27 Previous hostilities between Byblos and Ullassa could have facilitated the process. We have no information on the geopolitical situation, power relations, and conflicts in the area immediately before Thutmose III's campaigns, but one of the few Middle Kingdom mentions of Byblos narrates an ongoing war between Byblos and Ullassa (Allen 2008). This mention also shows that at the time of the Twelfth Dynasty the two cities were both independent. However, it is impossible to say what impact these earlier events, or their memory, had on the relations between Byblos and Ullassa at the time of Thutmose III, if any at all.

later: if the city was left unprotected in year 29, local leaders and/or Tunip may have taken advantage of the situation (*Urk.* IV 690:17–691:8). In this case, as Redford (2003, 218) and Morris (2005, 124) have suggested, it would have been only after the second conquest in year 31 that Thutmose III consolidated his presence and left a garrison in the city. In this second case, it would not be clear who ruled and administered the city in the previous period of Egyptian control, between year 29 and year 31. Once again, however, Byblos with its traditional close links with Egypt, looks like the best candidate.

Such a scenario, in which Byblos took advantage of the Egyptian conquests in the area to extend its own political control and influence as far north as Ullassa, agrees with all the information present in the sources of the time of Thutmose III. The absence of references to conquered cities in southern Lebanon in the Annals and in the topographical list, as well as the allusions to a “written agreement” (*nt-ʿ*; see above), suggest that when Thutmose III reached Lebanon, Byblos and possibly other coastal cities south of it did not resist and joined the Egyptian side. The news of Thutmose III’s conquests in the nearby southern Levant and the prospect of advantages with respect to local regional alliances and rivalries, together with a long tradition of friendly relations, could have influenced the political line adopted by these coastal cities, which may have actively supported the invading forces. Byblos, in particular, seems to have played an important role in strategically backing the Egyptian armies, and it is tempting to think that the city took advantage of the situation to extend its own political influence northwards towards, and perhaps at the expense of, Ullassa.

The scenario sketched here could find some distant support in the Amarna letters. First, some statements in the letters of Rib-Hadda, king of Byblos, may refer to the support given by the city to the Egyptians at the time of Thutmose III (see §5.4.3). Moreover, the general geopolitical landscape of the Amarna letters appears similar to that posited above, with Byblos directly or indirectly controlling the areas to the north; the main difference is in the position and prominence of Sumur, which was the seat of the Egyptian authority in the area in the Amarna period (§5.4.5). This does not seem to be the case under Thutmose III, possibly because at the time the city had just been conquered (in year 30, *Urk.* IV 689:13) and the area was still unstable. The establishment of an Egyptian administrative presence in the city may thus have been a successive development of the Egyptian policy in the area that took place during the reign of one of Thutmose III’s successors, but before the Amarna Age. It should be noted that Byblos was not geostrategically the best-placed city on the Lebanese coast. It did not have a particularly good harbour and did not directly control any major road towards inner Syria. Tyre, for instance, had better

harbours, was located at the intersection between the road along the coast and the one leading to the Beqa'a Valley and Qadesh, while its island location rendered it almost impregnable. Byblos, however, had the advantage of having a long tradition of friendship with Egypt. This is an important aspect that contrasts with later periods, when Egypt's claims and suzerainty on the northern Levant had been a geopolitical reality for decades or centuries and the territory was better known and easier to access and control, so that imperial activities could be optimised strategically. Before Thutmose III, however, the Egyptians had never controlled those territories, and the Pharaoh and his armies were advancing as newcomers, invaders, and conquerors. The Egyptian grip needed to be established, not consolidated. In such a context, having a friendly local city on which the Egyptians could rely must have been crucial to the definition of Thutmose III's strategy and may have even been more important than mere geographical considerations. Byblos could have taken advantage of this situation, actively supporting the Egyptian armies in exchange for various rewards and privileges.

#### 1.5.2 The Lady of Byblos and Her Temple

Another prominent element in the sources of the time of Thutmose III is the role of the Lady of Byblos in the economic interactions between Egypt and the city. Two aspects are explicitly mentioned: Thutmose III's sponsoring of building activities in her temple, recorded in Minmose's inscription (§5.2.2), and the presentation of offerings to the goddess by Sennefri (§5.2.3).

The latter is paralleled in the account of the expedition to Punt sponsored by Hatshepsut, where the Egyptian crew also presented offerings to a local deity they identified with Hathor. The two episodes have attracted the attention of scholars. Liverani, in particular, suggested that these offerings should be understood as nothing but an ideologically acceptable way to present and describe a "payment" for traded goods (Liverani 1990b, 248–49; Liverani 2001, 168–70).

Egyptian building activities are instead mentioned in the biographical inscription of Minmose, who claims to have "directed works" in a temple of Hathor in the city (§5.2.2). This is a realistic claim, because two blocks bearing part of the name of Thutmose III, the archaeological context of which is unknown, were found in Byblos (§3.5, §4.5, §4.6). Such building activities reinforced the link with Egypt, and brought the temple, at least ideologically, within the domain of the Pharaoh, turning it, again at least ideologically, into an "Egyptian" temple for an "Egyptian" goddess. This is indeed implied by Minmose's biography, where the Temple of Hathor Lady of Byblos is listed alongside other Egyptian temples. The ideological manoeuvre described above

thus appears to be quite sophisticated: if the temple to which these offerings were made could be considered as an “Egyptian” temple for an Egyptian goddess, what was in effect a payment to a foreign king of lower status acquired the character of an act of religious piety comparable to those that the Pharaoh performed towards Hathor in Egypt. In other words, what in practice was a payment, ideologically was not a “payment” anymore, and thus all transactions could be rephrased according to a more conventional and ideologically acceptable narrative about the king making offerings to an Egyptian goddess.

Moreover, during the New Kingdom, temples became important elements of the Egyptian imperial administrative structure in the Levant, functioning as centres for the collection of taxes and tributes (Singer 1988, 4–5). Morris (2005, 120–21) and others have suggested that during his campaigns Thutmose III used some temples in the Levant as economic and administrative centres. In particular, she proposes that the temple of Byblos could have been one of them, and the statue of Djehuty discussed above (3.5) could support this hypothesis. Its inscriptions state that he oversaw the collection and shipment of the tribute of “the chiefs of the northern Levant (*rtnw*).” These activities took place in an Egyptian administrative centre on the Levantine coast, and it is plausible that this was Byblos. Temples were well-established actors within the local economic systems, both in the Levant and in Egypt. Diego Espinel (2002) has shown that the temple of Byblos was central to the city’s interactions with Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom. He proposes that the economies of the temple and the palace of Byblos were closely connected, with the goddess functioning as a sort of cultural bridge between Egypt and the city, facilitating interactions and therefore commerce. Close links between temples and palace seem also to have been common in the Levant. Similar interactions can be recognised also in Late Bronze Age Ugarit and Alalakh (Klengel 1979; Gaál 1988; Lipiński 1988, 125; Zeeb 2001). In Ugarit, it appears that priests were employees within the royal administration (Heltzer 1982; Lipiński 1988), could have economic functions among their responsibilities, and received payments from the taxes and offerings managed by the palace like other specialists of the king (Anderson 1987, 79; Pagolu 1998, 177; Altmann 2011, 223). It is thus likely that also in Bronze Age Ugarit the economies of the palace and the main temples were integrated, and as Wyatt (1999, 563 n. 99) points out, the temple itself was an important element in the life of the city.

It thus appears that at the time of Thutmose III the Lady of Byblos and her temple were important actors in the relations between Egypt and Byblos, continuing a tradition going back to the Old Kingdom. This involvement of the goddess and her temple in the city’s interactions with Egypt had a significant

impact on its socio-political structure, and the two developed in relation to each other (see next paragraph and further §6.5.0.1 and §6.5.0.2).

### 1.5.3 Relations with Egypt and Ideological Frameworks

A final aspect emerging from the texts dating to the reign of Thutmose III is the presence of ideological frameworks that influenced the Egyptian perceptions of and interactions with Byblos. Expeditions like that of Sennefri were not seeking common Levantine products. Rather, the main goal was to obtain timber from the “God’s Land” for the bark and other items related with the temple of Amun in Karnak. No doubt the Egyptians acquired other goods that did not end up in Karnak. The wood and the other products for the temple were nevertheless the salient aim of the expedition, and their ideological and sacred connotations may have consecrated the mission itself, as it is clear also in the case of Hatshepsut’s mission to Punt.

Moreover, Sennefri’s journey presents remarkable similarities with Hatshepsut’s Punt expedition. Both missions were presented as being the will of Amun and were both aimed at a God’s Land, in the south or in the north. Both were seeking marvellous goods to bring back to Egypt, and in return both made offerings to a local goddess identified with Hathor. Finally, Eichler (1998, 222–28) points out that both Hatshepsut’s account and Sennefri’s text present stylistic characteristics of the *Königsnovelle* genre (see §5.2.3 and §6.5.0.2). It is possible that Sennefri’s journey was celebrated with official literary compositions, ideologically analogous to that of Hatshepsut, that happen not to have survived. All these similarities suggest that these two expeditions took place within a common ideological framework. Such a framework, which must be assessed within a perspective going beyond the sources of the time of Thutmose III, is discussed in more detail in §6.5.0.2.

## 2 From Amenhotep II to the Amarna Period

Sources of this period are rather silent about Byblos. Only two texts mention the city, and the information they give is extremely limited. The first (§5.3.1), dating to the reign of Amenhotep II, suggests that people from Byblos were living in Egypt. The second (§5.3.2) is a topographical list inscribed on the columns of the temple of Soleb and dating to Amenhotep III. Although topographical lists are known from the reigns of Amenhotep III’s predecessors, the list in Soleb is the earliest known mentioning Byblos and other cities of the southern Lebanese coast.



## 2.1 *Stele of Wsr-stt*

*Wsr-stt* was viceroy of Kush during the reign Amenhotep II. He is known from a number of sources, but no biographical text is attested for him and his tomb has not been found. His career can thus be reconstructed only on the basis of titles and other clues in his inscriptions. He was the son of *S3-Jmn*, a man bearing only the title *s3b*, and of *Nn-hr-mnt=s*, a lady of the harem during the reign of Thutmose III. He probably grew up in the palace together with Amenhotep II, and he became a royal herald (*wḥmw nsw*), a function in which he may have fought in northern Syria (for early career and life see Helck 1955, 30; Der Manuelian 1987, 154). Later, during the reign of Amenhotep II or perhaps already under Thutmose III, he was appointed viceroy of Kush (Helck 1955, 30). The end of his career is mysterious. His name is erased from some of his monuments, suggesting that he may have fallen into disgrace (Der Manuelian 1987, 158).

The stele<sup>28</sup> discussed here presents some unusual characteristics. The text is dated to year 23 of Amenhotep II and reproduces a *wḏ*  (line 1, *Urk.* IV 1343:11). The word means “letter” when the term refers to a communication coming from the king, which in this case has been copied on a stele, as the determinative suggests. This letter is said to have been written to *Wsr-stt* by the Pharaoh *m* *wy=fy* “with his own hands.” The rather fragmentary text starts with a date “Year 23, 4th month of Akhet, 1st day, day of the festival of the Coronation” (Helck 1955, 25), followed by a description of the context in which the letter was written. It says that the Pharaoh, whom Helck and Der Manuelian identify with Amenhotep II (Helck 1955, 25; Der Manuelian 1987, 157), was drinking and having a *hrw nfr*, “a good day,” in the palace when he decided to write to his viceroy. The letter which follows begins with a laudatory (or better self-laudatory) introduction of the king, followed by a sequence of laudatory epithets for *Wsr-stt*. The content and message is essentially a royal complaint concerning a Nubian servant sent to the palace by *Wsr-stt* (ll. 11–12, *Urk.* IV 1344:13–14) and a general invective against Nubians, with the king urging *Wsr-stt* to beware of “their people and their magicians” (lines 10–11 – *Urk.* IV

28 Findspot: Semna Fort, discovered by the Boston Museum expedition in 1924 (expedition no. 24-2-319). Current location: Boston Museum of Fine Arts – MFA 25.632.

Material: white limestone (Helck 1955, 22).

Dimensions: 94 × 58 × 10 cm.

Bibliography: *Urk.* IV 1343–44, Helck 1955; Dunham and Janssen 1960, 17, pl. 82; Der Manuelian 1987, 155–58; Leprohon 1991, MFA 25.632; Darnell 2014 with references.

General description: fragmentary; only two pieces discovered, and the top is lost. The better preserved lower portion bears the text, which is partially damaged but legible (Der Manuelian 1987, 155–57; Leprohon 1991, MFA 25.632 1/4).

1344:12) and exhorting him not to pay attention to “their words” (or “matters”) and missions.

The language is noteworthy: the carefully constructed structure of the text (see below) suggesting a high register, combined with the facetious content and the use of (early) Late Egyptian, produces an ironic and playful effect (Helck 1955, 29), especially in something supposedly written by the king himself.

This is the only known example of a letter that appears to deal with trivial topics in a quite personal and friendly way being inscribed on a stele, and it is impossible to know whether the text reproduces an actual royal letter or if such presentation was rather meant as a literary device. This uniqueness makes the function of such a stele difficult to grasp. Helck (1955, 31) suggested that *Wsr-stt* decided to “publish” this letter for reasons of prestige, as a demonstration of his close friendship with the king, but since the text is unique, it is difficult to suggest any reliable interpretation (see Darnell 2014 for a discussion of previous scholarship and interpretations).

The mention of Byblos is in the laudatory words that the king addresses to his viceroy.

Amenhotep II describes *Wsr-stt* as (*Urk.* IV 1343:19–1344:7):

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>5</sup> [... q]ny qf <sup>c</sup> w hr h <sup>3</sup> swt nb(w)                                   | [...] a brave one who loots from all foreign lands                                           |
| snn šf <sup>c</sup> w n hm=f (jmn htp hq <sup>3</sup> jwnw)                                            | a charioteer who has fought for His Majesty Amenhotep (II)                                   |
| <sup>6</sup> [...] nhryn <sup>3</sup><br>djw š <sup>3</sup> w p <sup>3</sup> h <sup>3</sup> ty         | [...] Naharin,<br>who decided (lit. “gave”) the fate of the land of Khaty, <sup>a</sup>      |
| p <sup>3</sup> <sup>7</sup> [nb n hmt] m s <sup>3</sup> -n-g <sup>3</sup> -r(š)                        | the [owner (lit. “master”) of a woman] from Sangar (Babylon),                                |
| sdmt-š m k <sup>3</sup> bn<br>mswt <sup>8</sup> [šrj]t nt j-r(š)-r-h<br>j <sup>3</sup> t nt j-r(š)-p-h | of a maidservant from Byblos,<br>of a girl-c[hild] of Alalakh<br>of a old woman of Arrapkha. |

a. Or possibly an unusual spelling for Hatti? Note that in this text also the name of Byblos is spelled in an unusual way. See Darnell 2014, 251–52.e.

The text associates *Wsr-stt* with a servant from Byblos, possibly as her owner, if Sethe’s reconstruction in *Urk.* IV 1344:4 is correct. Gaál (1976) assumed so, and took this mention as historically accurate. He thus tried to identify the historical circumstances and events in which *Wsr-stt* could have obtained these

women. For Byblos, he argued that the servant could have been acquired during a campaign of Thutmose III, possibly the one in which the king stopped in Byblos to build ships (Gaál 1976, 208; see §5.2.1). As tempting as it may be, this idea should be taken with extreme caution, because it actually relies entirely on Sethe's reconstruction, which in turn is not supported by any actual traces in the lacuna, or by any other evidence in the text.

In addition, even if Sethe's suggestion were correct, it is not assured that these women actually existed, as this could be a fictionalising statement that relates to and perhaps prefigures Amenhotep II's focus on foreigners later in the text. Although the mention of specific cities, including unusual ones such as Arrapkha, could support the idea of a realistic account, Helck (1955, 29) highlighted the artfully developed structure underlying this list, which gives a vivid literary flavour to the whole passage (Helck 1955, 29). This is evident in the careful and distinctive selection of the three surviving words referring to women, namely *sdmt*-š "maid-servant," *mswt* [šrj]t, "child-girl," and *j3t*, "old woman," and in the paired opposition in which their origin is expressed, namely with the preposition *m* "from" for the first two, and with the genitive particle *nt* "of" for the last two.

The text's historical value must thus be assessed with caution. The stele cannot be used to argue that *Wsr-stt* captured or acquired a girl from Byblos during the campaigns of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II. It does indicate, however, that at the time of Amenhotep II servants and low-status people from the city were a known reality in Egypt.

## 2.2 *Topographical Lists*

Lists of foreign populations, cities, or regions are attested no later than the reign of Senuseret I (Giveon 1977, 171). The largest numbers of topographical lists come from the New Kingdom, starting in the early Eighteenth Dynasty. In particular Simons (1937) recorded ten lists from the Eighteenth Dynasty, sixteen from the Nineteenth Dynasty, seven from the Twentieth Dynasty, two from the Twenty-second Dynasty, and one from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Fragments of further lists, such as those of Amenhotep III from his mortuary temple at Kom El-Hetan or those in Ramses II's temples at Amara West and Aksha, were found later. The lists are generally composed of foreign geographical names written within rings representing the walls of fortified cities. A bust of a foreigner bound like a prisoner is normally added above them. Quite often these prisoners are attached to a rope held by the king or by one or more gods.

The potential historical and geographical value of such lists for the study of Late Bronze Age Syria-Palestine is clear. Their varying types, however, have to be taken into consideration to use them correctly. Kitchen (2009, 129–30) has

suggested that the lists should be classified in three typological groups<sup>29</sup> and eight categories in relation to the context in which they were used.<sup>30</sup> Their possible sources must also be taken into consideration: in some cases parts of lists may reflect real military activities or other kinds of contacts (Giveon 1977, 171, 181; Kitchen 2009, 133–34), while other examples appear to have been based on other kinds of administrative or literary documents (Helck 1971, 262; Giveon 1977, 181–82; Kitchen 2009, 133–34), or to have been copied or adapted from earlier lists. Furthermore, the lists often assemble material from different sources.

Topographical lists belong to the repertory of textual and iconographic motifs centred on the victory of the king over chaotic forces represented by hostile or subjugated foreign peoples. Although some of them may record and present real military exploits, their function is mainly ritual, ideological, and symbolic. Several authors have suggested that topographical lists could have an apotropaic power similar to that of execration texts: representations on temple walls of foreign lands being defeated and subdued by the king and the gods would forestall their rising against Egypt (e.g., Giveon 1964, 254; Giveon 1977, 171–72; see also detailed discussion by Martinez 1993). Thus, these lists were probably not specifically designed to describe the geographical reality of the time in which they were engraved, but to provide a “sample” representing all possible enemies.

As for Byblos, it appears only in three related lists in Nubia: one in the temple of Amenhotep III in Soleb, and another two in the nearby temples of Ramses II at Amara West and Aksha. The Ramessid lists were copied from that of Amenhotep III or from a common source (Helck 1971, 262; Giveon 1977, 179; see also discussion by Edel 1980). I discuss here only the list of Amenhotep III; those of Ramses II do not bring any additional relevant information.

The Soleb list<sup>31</sup> in which Byblos is mentioned presents a few peculiar features that are not attested in older lists. First, the sequence of names has no clear earlier parallel, suggesting that this list was essentially a new composition. The repetition of some names may indicate that it was compiled from several sources (Giveon 1977, 178–79). The Soleb list is carved on the bases of the columns in the hypostyle hall, an arrangement that is not found elsewhere.

29 1) Encyclopedic; 2) Regional lists, 3) Lesser lists (Kitchen 2009, 129–30).

30 1) Triumph-scenes; 2) Similar scenes and lists in lunettes of major steles; 3) Row of names along the base-panels of temple walls; 4) Sets of names inscribed around lower parts of columns and door-passages; 5) Lists inscribed around the base-blocks of royal statues and sphinxes, 6) Brief “heraldic” lists; 7) Series of place-names in non-list contexts; 8) Series of place-names in sets of battle-reliefs (Kitchen 2009, 129–30).

31 Published in Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. III 108–68; Vol. v pls. 215–300. See also Giveon 1964; Giveon 1977; Edel 1980; Grimal 2006; Grimal 2009.

The names are organised on the columns in more or less coherent geographical groups, with each column representing approximately a region or a part of the world (Giveon 1964, 241–53). Once again, this organization is attested only at Soleb.

Byblos appears on column 10, together with *qrqmš* (Karkemish), *jswr* (Asher?), *tnr(s)* (?), *jpttn* (Khirbet Ipthan), *mrknš* (?), *dr* (Tyre), *dtw(kr)* (?) (Giveon 1964, 250–51; Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, III 138 β4; V, 233). The geographical locations of the identifiable cities show that this column represents the Lebanese coast and part of northern Syria (Giveon 1964, 252). Grimal (2009, 346) suggests that an even more complex organization, based not only on geographical but also at least partly hierarchical considerations, underlies the list. In particular, he observes that the names of the main political entities of the time, such as Babylon (*sng*), Naharin (*nhryn*), and Hatti (*ht*), are inscribed on column V, which is next to the central axis, possibly in order to emphasise their importance. Some of Grimal's identifications are, however, questionable, as are some of his geographical groupings. For instance, on the very column where Byblos is inscribed, Grimal identifies *jswr* with Aššur, *tnr(s)* (which he reads *rwnrw*) and *jpttn* as Lullu and Abdadani in western Iran, and equates *dtw(kr)* with Sidon and reads *mrknš* as Murkunash, which he locates in modern Syrian Kurdistan, north of modern Al-Hasakah.<sup>32</sup> Although these identifications are not impossible for a period when Egyptians had contacts with Mitanni and Babylon and could thus have heard of such remote places, they are somewhat recondite. Nevertheless, his general idea may be valid.

The column on which Byblos is mentioned is in the second row from the central passage in the northern half of the room. This location does not suggest any specific relation between the city and Amenhotep III. Its inconspicuous position in the list presents the city as a Levantine centre without special distinguishing features, in contrast with its status in sources of the time of Thutmose III (§5.2, in particular §5.2.5). This could suggest that something changed in the Egyptian approach to the city and its region. Such a change would agree with what can be observed in the Amarna letters (§5.4 below), where the main concern of Rib-Hadda king of Byblos is with the Pharaoh's – Amenhotep III or IV – apparent lack of interest for his city.

More broadly, this list does not give the appearance of corresponding to any military exploit. Rather, its distribution on the columns seems to constitute an encyclopaedic representation of the geographical entities with which Egypt

32 Grimal 2009, 347 and passim – I was not able to find any modern town or village called Murkunash in that area. The only candidate would be the modern village of Markadah, previously known as Makasîn, which however is located south of Al-Hasakah.



had not only military, but also trading and diplomatic relations. The list could still have had an apotropaic function, but its scope appears to be more “universalistic” than its predecessors: here the king and the associated gods are not considered only as the rulers of Egypt and its champions against the chaotic forces outside its borders, but he is presented as a ruler whose dominion extends over the whole world and all its nations, including those too far from Egypt to be an actual threat. This global perspective is probably not unique to Soleb: Amenhotep III’s topographical lists in his mortuary temple at Kom El-Hetan, which are the earliest known including Aegean toponyms, suggest a similar vision (see e.g., Cline and Stannish 2011). Amenhotep III was probably not the first king whose topographical lists could imply such a universal perspective (see e.g., Givon 1969, 55–57 for Thutmose IV’s chariot list). His lists, however, are the earliest in which such a global geographical knowledge appears in detail.

As I have argued elsewhere (Kilani 2016b and below §6.5.0.2), a shift in paradigm in the Egyptian geographical imaginary and narratives about the organization of the world seems to have taken place during the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>33</sup> In particular, one can observe the emergence of the concept of a universal ruler and a royal narrative ideologically aiming and claiming control over the whole world.<sup>34</sup> After the conquests of Thutmose III, there seems to have been a shift from an Egyptocentric geographical narrative towards an acknowledgement of a more complex geopolitical reality. These two aspects are likely related, because in order to claim control over the whole world, one has to know something about it, while at the same time increased knowledge leads to a reconsideration of traditional ideological narratives about it. Comparable developments can be observed in other cultures and historical periods, such as in Imperial China (Lewis 1999) or Colonial Europe (Baber 1996; MacLeod 2000; Schiebinger and Swan 2005; Trumbull 2009; McClellan 2010; Boomgaard 2013). Amenhotep III’s topographical lists, with their more “global” organization and scope, would fit well with such a development and new ideological framework.

The absence of Byblos from the earlier lists also deserves attention. First, Byblos is not the only southern Lebanese city to be absent or extremely rare in them. Tyre (*d3-yr*) appears first in this Soleb list and, apart from the related lists of Amara West and Aksha, it then occurs only in lists of the reigns of Seti I,

33 This shift in paradigm in the geographical narratives probably took place within a larger shift in Egypt’s general worldview, at least among the elites. See below §6.5.0.2.

34 For instance, before the Eighteenth Dynasty the Egyptian kings claimed to vaguely “extend the borders” of Egypt, while the kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty started claiming to have “extended the borders up to the limits of the world.”

Ramses II, and Ramses III.<sup>35</sup> Beirut (*b<sup>3</sup>-j-rw-tw*) is perhaps mentioned in the list of Thutmose III,<sup>36</sup> while Sidon (*dy-dw-n<sup>3</sup>*) is not attested in any surviving list. If this absence concerned only one list, this could be an accident of preservation, with the names of these cities being lost in lacunae. But none of these cities is attested with certainty in any list from before the time of Amenhotep III. This absence cannot be due to lack of knowledge or interest in the region, because other cities of the same area such as Karkemish, Qatna, Qadesh, Tunip and Ugarit are well attested in other New Kingdom lists, both earlier and later (respectively at least four, seven, eleven, eight, and two times).<sup>37</sup> The omission of Tyre, Beirut, and Sidon could simply indicate their limited importance in

35 I.e., Simons's list xiii (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 32:57), list xiv (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 29:62), list xv (Seti I, Qurneh, *KRI* I 33:21), list xvi (Seti I, Abydos, *KRI* I 32:b,3), list xx (Rams. II, Luxor, *KRI* II 178:14), list xxi (Rams. II, Luxor, *KRI* II 177:33), list xxvii (Rams. III, Medinet Habu, *KRI* V 96:121).

36 *b<sup>3</sup>-j-rw-tw* No. 19 and 109 of Simons's list i (Simons 1937, 116, 118; *Urk.* IV 782:1: 19, 786:1: 109). This identification, however, is doubtful and had already been rejected, for instance, by Gauthier (Gauthier 1925–1931, II 2) who identified the place mentioned with Berotha-Atherûn. Moreover, in Pap. Anastasi I 20:8 Beirut is written *b<sup>3</sup>-rw-tj*, without *-j* (= aliph). The aliph, could, however, be irregularly written or pronounced in the time of Thutmose III but no longer in the time of Ramses II. Simons's suggestion therefore remains possible.

37 In particular, leaving aside the list of Amara West which is likely a copy of the Soleb one: Karkemish: list i (Thut. III, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 792:3: 270), list xxvii (Rams. III, Medinet Habu, *KRI* V 94:29) in Simons 1937, and in a list at Kom El-Hetan (Rams. II, Kitchen 1965, 4: 7, pls. ii, viii) and in one at Soleb (Amen. III, Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. v, 232 – not in Simons).

Qatna list vi (Amen. II, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 1338:5: 17), list ix (Amen. III, Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. v, 231), list xii (Horem., Karnak, 2 times: a,11, c,15), list xiii (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 31:30), list xiv (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 28:31), list xxx (Rams. III, Medinet Habu, *KRI* V 35:7) in Simons 1937, and in a list at Luxor (Rams. II, Kitchen 1965, 6: a,16, pls. iii, x).

Qadesh list i (Thut. III, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 781:6: 1), list vi (Amen. II, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 1338:3: 12), list viii (Thut. IV, tomb KV 43, *Urk.* IV 1560:16: 5), list ix (Amen. III, Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. v, 223), list xii (Horem., Karnak: a,10), list xiii (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 31:28), list xiv (Seti I, Karnak, *KRI* I 28:29), list xv (Seti I, Qurneh, *KRI* I 34:31), list xvii (Seti I, Wadi Abbad, *KRI* I 36:3), list xxxiii (Rams. III, Karnak, temple of Amun, *KRI* V 111:3:a,6) in Simons 1937, and in a list at Karnak (Rams. II, Kitchen 1965, 8: d,2, pl. xiv).

Tunip list i (Thut. III, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 781:12: 127), list vi (Amen. II, Karnak, *Urk.* IV 1338:4: 16), list viii (Thut. IV, tomb KV 43, *Urk.* IV 1560:15: 3), list ix (Amen. III, Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. v, 223), list xii (Horem., Karnak, 2 times: a,9, c,13), list xv (Seti I, Qurneh, *KRI* I 34:32,38), list xxx (Rams. III, Medinet Habu, *KRI* V 35:3) in Simons 1937, and in a list at Karnak (Rams. II, Kitchen 1965, 8: d,1, pl. xiv).

Ugarit: list ix (Amen. III, Schiff Giorgini et al. 1965–2013, Vol. v, 223), list xii (Horem., Karnak, 2 times: a,12) in Simons 1937.

Egyptian eyes: although they became the main centres of the Phoenician civilization in the Iron Age, they do not seem to have been particularly prominent in New Kingdom Egyptian sources, neither before the Amarna Period nor in the Nineteenth Dynasty (see below §5.4, §5.6). This interpretation seems to fit with the scarcity of archaeological evidence from these sites<sup>38</sup> as well as with the fact that they do not appear in any other Egyptian documents dating to the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>39</sup>

However, if a supposed geopolitical irrelevance could perhaps justify the absence of those southern Lebanese cities from the lists, such an explanation could hardly work for Byblos, since the archaeological evidence shows that the city played a prominent role and had strong links with Egypt before and during the Eighteenth Dynasty, while textual attestations show that the Egyptians were well aware of its importance. This considered, it may perhaps be better to correlate the absence of Byblos from topographical lists with this very prominence: if the lists represented foreigners potentially threatening Egypt, Byblos could have been left out because of its long tradition of friendship with the Pharaohs.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, if Byblos allied or submitted itself to Egypt, possibly within the frame of a treaty (see §5.2.5.1), its pro-Egyptian political line could have induced New Kingdom compilers to omit it from their lists of defeated enemies and dangerous foreigners. This explanation could also apply to the other southern Lebanese cities: if they sided with Thutmose III and had treaties with Egypt as well, they too could have been omitted from the lists because of their friendly and collaborative attitude. Be that as it may, their presence in the Soleb list shows that at the time of Amenhotep III, something had changed in the conceptions of the meaning of topographical lists, in the attitudes towards these cities, or in both.

38 Although this too could be a matter of accidents of conservation and discovery, considering also that the excavations of Sidon by Contenau at the beginning of the last century and by Dunand in 1969 were never properly published. In general, see Katzenstein 1973; Ward 1997; Doumet-Serhal 2013.

39 Yet some of these Lebanese cities, including Byblos, are mentioned in Middle Kingdom execration texts (e.g., Ben-Tor 2006), which may therefore suggest a different picture. It is true, however, that as pointed out by Ben-Tor (2006, 78, n. 14), some mentioned cities, such as Tyre, were probably abandoned when the execration texts were written. Therefore a mention there does not necessarily prove that a city was important, only that the Egyptians knew of its existence.

40 In this respect it is interesting to note that in Middle Kingdom execration texts, in contrast with all other mentioned Levantine cities, it is not the “city” of Byblos that is pointed out as an enemy, but its “tribes,” as if the threat was not in the city itself, but just in the populations of its region (see Ben-Tor 2006, 67).

### 3 The Amarna Period

The cuneiform letters found in Amarna are the only written source available to study the city in this period. No contemporary mention of the city in Egyptian texts is known, and no relevant source has been identified outside Egypt.

#### 3.1 *Amarna Letters*

The Amarna archive consists of cuneiform tablets written mainly in Akkadian found on the site of Tell El-Amarna, the capital of Akhenaton and of one or more of his successors. The main part of the archive consists of thirty-two non-diplomatic texts and 350 letters, drafts, and inventories, usually of diplomatic content, sent to the Pharaoh by his Levantine vassals or by other states, such as Assyria, Mitanni, or Babylon (Moran 1992, xv–xviii). The absolute chronology of these documents is uncertain, but they can be roughly dated to the last years of Amenhotep III and to the reign of Akhenaton, covering a period no longer than thirty years. The archive was abandoned with the city, at the end of the Amarna Age.

Rib-Hadda, the contemporary king of Byblos, was the most prolific author of the archive, and his letters are very informative both for the history of the city and of the region as a whole. The chronology of Rib-Hadda's letters has been discussed more than once, and although doubts remain about the chronological position of single tablets, the general frame and sequence adopted by Moran (1992) appears to be the most likely (see also: Pryke 2010, 32–52). Two main periods can be identified: the first corresponds to the time of the leader of Amurru 'Abdi-Ashirta, while the second is marked by the rise of 'Abdi-Ashirta's son, Aziru. The first period corresponds roughly to the last years of reign of Amenhotep III and the second to the reign of Akhenaton. These periods were characterised by two consecutive wars between Byblos and Amurru, and they are used as a chronological frame in this section.

In contrast with earlier chapters, here I do not present, translate, and discuss each of Rib-Hadda's letters individually. His letters have been discussed and analysed in specific studies (Liverani 1974; Youngblood 1961; Liverani 1979c; Moran 1992; Pryke 2010), and in view of their number, a detailed reassessment of his correspondence would be beyond the scope of this book. Instead, I decided to adopt a topic-oriented approach, which focuses on passages and references concerning specific aspects and problems relevant to my research. The principal topics I discuss here are the role of the goddess of Byblos in the interactions with Egypt, the evidence of ordinary trade, the mentions of pre-Amarna interactions with Egypt, and the location and evolution of the borders of the kingdom of Byblos.

The transliterations in the following paragraphs are based on published editions of the tablets.<sup>41</sup> The translations of the passages are usually mine, and checked against those of Moran (1992), Izre'el (1991), Pryke (2010), and Rainey and Schniedewind (2015).

### 3.2 *The Goddess of Byblos in the Amarna Letters*

The socio-economic importance of the “Lady of Byblos”<sup>42</sup> observed in the sources of the time of Thutmose III can be also perceived in Rib-Hadda’s correspondence. The prominent position of the goddess is evident from the openings of his letters, where he often adds the blessings of the “Lady of Byblos” to his introductory greetings. In EA 68:4–8, for instance, the king of Byblos addresses the Pharaoh by wishing: “May the Lady of Byblos grant power to the king, my lord. I fall at the feet of my lord, my Sun, seven times and seven times.”<sup>43</sup> Similar expressions can be found in twenty-seven letters.<sup>44</sup> Rib-Hadda is the only Levantine king who sends the blessing of a deity of his city to the Pharaoh. It is difficult to say whether this practice was a local peculiarity, a traditional greeting common in the city, or if it was a conscious attempt to attract the attention of the Egyptian king by reminding him that Byblos was not just a vassal city but also the seat of the “Lady.” A letter of a king of Byblos found in Ugarit that begins with a rather standard salutation not mentioning the goddess may support the second option (§5.6.5.1; RS 18.134).

This pattern suggests that Rib-Hadda expected the Egyptians to feel some form of respect or reverence towards his goddess. Not only did he believe that the Lady of Byblos could bless and protect the Pharaoh, he also claimed (EA 116:63–67) that the Pharaoh was appointed by the goddess herself, together with the “gods and the Sun.”<sup>45</sup> Such a claim is noteworthy, as it implies a relation of subordination of the Egyptian king to the goddess of Byblos. The confidence of Rib-Hadda and the boldness of such a statement can hardly be a manifestation of a purely local and unfounded theological parochialism, especially because it

41 In particular Knudtzon et al. 1915, Rainey and Schniedewind 2015 and Izre'el: <http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/semitic/amarna.html> (accessed 2.3.2018).

42 The main goddess of the city, called *nbt-kpn* in Egyptian and usually <sup>d</sup>NIN *ša URU gu-ub-la* in the letters of Rib-Hadda – e.g., EA 68:4.

43 <sup>4</sup>[<sup>d</sup>]NIN *ša URU gu-ub-la* <sup>5</sup>*ti-id-di-in* <sup>4</sup>*du-na* <sup>6</sup>*a-na* LUGAL *be-li-ia* <sup>7</sup>*a-na* GIR<sub>3</sub>.MEŠ EN-*ia* <sup>d</sup>UTU-*ia* <sup>8</sup>*7-šu* <sup>7</sup>*ta-a-an am-qut* (EA 68:4–8).

44 From the First Period: EA 68:4–6, EA 74:2–4, EA 75:3–4, EA 76:3–5, EA 78:3–5, EA 79:3–5, EA 81:3–4, EA 83:3–4, EA 85:4–5, EA 89:3–4, EA 92:5–6. From the Second Period: EA 105:3–4, EA 107:4–6, EA 108:4–5, EA 109:2–3, EA 114:3–4, EA 116:3–5, EA 117:3–4, EA 118:6–8, EA 119:3–5, EA 121:3–5, EA 122:4–6, EA 123:4–7, EA 124:3–4, EA 125:5–7.

45 <sup>63</sup>*u<sub>3</sub> an-nu-u<sub>2</sub> na-a[d-nu-ka]* <sup>64</sup>DINGIR.MEŠ *u<sub>3</sub>* <sup>d</sup>UTU *u<sub>3</sub>* <sup>d</sup>N[IN] <sup>65</sup>*ša URU gub-la u<sub>3</sub> aš-[b] a[-ta]* <sup>66</sup>*a-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA *E<sub>2</sub> a-bi-ka* <sup>67</sup>*a-na* KUR-*ka* (EA 116:63–67).



has no parallel in the letters of any other Levantine king. In view of the nature and long history of the interactions between Egypt and Byblos, one can easily explain how such an idea could have arisen in the city and how it could even have been (unconsciously?) nurtured by the actions of the Egyptians themselves: the more Egyptian acts of worship and offerings (in exchange for goods) flowed into the temples of Byblos, the more the people of the city may have been encouraged to believe that their goddess occupied a primary position in the lives of their Egyptian visitors.<sup>46</sup> And since the Lady of Byblos had enjoyed the attention of the Egyptians no later than the Old Kingdom, at the time of Rib-Hadda this feeling would have been well established.

The wealth deposited in the sacred places of Byblos would have corroborated this idea. In *EA* 137:60–62, Rib-Hadda affirms that “there is much silver and gold” in the city and “much is the property” of its temple(s).<sup>47</sup> He knew that these riches came in good part from Egypt, as can be seen where he warns the Pharaoh that “If Byblos becomes their (i.e., of the sons of ‘Abdi-Ashirta’s) city, there is much property of the king in it, possessions of our ancestors in the past.”<sup>48</sup>

All these letters describe a reality of long-established interactions that agrees well with what emerges from the Egyptian sources, where the Lady of Byblos appears as an important economic intermediary (§5.2.5; §6.4). The involvement of the Lady of Byblos in the economic life of the city may also be alluded to in *EA* 77:8–11, where she is cited as a witness to the lack of copper for Rib-Hadda and for her “unjustly treated ones.”<sup>49</sup> This passage is, however, fragmentary and this is not the only possible interpretation.<sup>50</sup>

46 For instance, as suggested by Arto Belekdanian (personal communication), earlier Pharaohs may have made their reverence to the Lady of Byblos explicit during their multiple visits to the city, for instance personally bringing offerings to her temple.

47 <sup>60</sup>*šum-ma ma-galma-ad* <sup>61</sup>KU<sub>3</sub>.BABBAR KU<sub>3</sub>.GI *a-na lib<sub>3</sub>-bi-ši a-na* E<sub>2</sub>.DINGIR.MEŠ-ši <sup>62</sup>*ma-ad mi-im-mu* (*EA* 137:60–62) - For *šum-ma* as introductory particle (“Behold!”) see Moran 1992, 1992, 108 n. 3, 220 n. 11.

48 <sup>72</sup>*u<sub>3</sub> qi<sub>2</sub>-be-ti* <sup>73</sup>*a-na be-li-ia a-mur* URU *gub-li* URU-*lu*.KI-ši-*na* <sup>74</sup>*ma-ad mi-im* LUGAL *a-na lib<sub>3</sub>-bi-ši mar-ši-te*.MEŠ <sup>75</sup>LU<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ *ab-<bu->ti-nu pa-na-nu* (*EA* 137:72–75).

49 *hab-[l]i-še* (*EA* 77:11), following Moran 1992, 147–48.

50 Rainey and Schniedewind reconstruct *i-nu-ma* <sup>7</sup>*ta-aš-pu-ra a[-na]* URUDU.MEŠ *u<sub>3</sub> a-na* <sup>8</sup>*ši<sub>2</sub>-in<sub>4</sub>-ni-m[i ti]-i-de* dNIN <sup>9</sup>*ša* URU *gub-l[a]* *šum-ma i-šu* <sup>10</sup>URUDU.MEŠ *u<sub>3</sub> š[i-i]n<sub>4</sub>-ni* *[pi<sub>2</sub>-r]* <sup>11</sup>*a-na ia-ši* *u<sub>3</sub>* [URU].KI-*li-šix*(ŠE) <sup>12</sup>*m mil-ka-yu* <sup>13</sup>NA<sub>2</sub> *ma-[h]a-aš* <sup>14</sup>*u<sub>3</sub> na-ad-n[a-t]* *ši-in<sub>4</sub>-na-šu* <sup>15</sup>*[a-n]a ba-la-t[i<sub>3</sub>-ia] a-na* [LUGAL] URU *šur-r[i]*. They translate “Inasmuch as you have written con[cerning] copper and concerning ivory, the Lady of Byblos [kn]ows if I have (or: there is) copper or [elepha]nt ivory, either to me or to her [cit]y! Milkayu overlaid one [bed] but I gave its ivory [fo]r [my] sustenance to [the king] of the city of Tyre.” (Rainey and Schniedewind 2015, 466–67).

The goddess obviously needed cult personnel to exercise her influence. *EA* 83:51–57, *EA* 84:42–44, and *EA* 85:84–86 show that the personnel had, or at least attempted to have, a voice in the city’s international relations. All these letters contain traces of messages sent to the Pharaoh by the “maidservant of the Lady of Byblos” Ummahnu and her husband Milkuru.<sup>51</sup> None of the messages themselves survives.<sup>52</sup> Here too, Byblos is exceptional within the Amarna archives: among the surviving letters from all the cities, these are the only ones in which a local religious figure tries to communicate with the Pharaoh. These passages thus show that the temple clergy assumed that they were in a position to address the Egyptian suzerain; naturally the letters do not say anything about the Egyptian reception of and reaction to their presence in these diplomatic exchanges. At the same time, Rib-Hadda’s mediation highlights the centrality of the king in the city’s politics and international relations and points to the existence of close links between the monarchy and the personnel of the goddess. Such ties agree with the general economic role of the temple emerging from other evidence and they also constitute an antecedent for the interplay between religious and political powers attested among the Phoenicians and in the wider West-Semitic world during the Iron Age.<sup>53</sup> Strong links between political and religious powers are also evident in Late Bronze Age Ugarit, where the centrality of the king in the ritual life of the city is attested by various documents found in the city (Wyatt 1999, 559–62), and is confirmed by the physical proximity of the royal palace to a “palatial” or “royal” temple (Yon 2006, 49). There is, however, a significant difference between Ugarit and Byblos: in the evidence from Ugarit it is the king who plays a role in the religious life of the city, while in the evidence from Byblos it is the temple personnel who try to be involved in the diplomacy – and thus the politics? – of the city.

Finally, this intervention from the clergy is made by a woman with her husband, rather than by a man with his wife. Attestations of priestesses and female cult personnel are rare in the Bronze Age West-Semitic world, and in later periods priestesses do not appear to be prominent, although mentions of them are

51 <sup>53f</sup> *um-ma-ah-nu* *u<sub>3</sub> m* *mil-ku-ru* <sup>54</sup>*mu-ut-še* GEME *ša* <sup>d</sup>NIN <sup>55</sup>[*ša* UR]U *gu[b-l]a* (*EA* 83:53–55).

52 Vidal (2010) has suggested that these letters could refer to a journey to Egypt by the priestess Ummahnu herself. This suggestion, however, is based solely on his reconstruction of the text in the many lacunae of these passages.

53 Classical sources state, for instance, that in the ninth century BCE Ethoba’al, a priest of Astarte, became king of Tyre, founding a new dynasty (Katzenstein 1973, 129); in general, it seems that the priestly class in Tyre was related to the royal family (Katzenstein 1973, 129–30). Similarly, strong ties are attested between the king and priests in Iron Age Jerusalem (see e.g., Goodblatt 2001; in general Lorberbaum 2011).

known in Phoenician and Punic contexts.<sup>54</sup> The presence of Ummahnu in the letters of Rib-Hadda is therefore a remarkable exception among the Levantine sources, probably due to the fact that the main deity of the city was a goddess, rather than a god.

To sum up, it appears that during the Amarna period the Lady of Byblos remained central to the city's interactions with Egypt, or at least this is what the king of Byblos seems to have thought. One may wonder how these repeated references to a traditional goddess and to the Pharaoh's being somewhat subordinate to her were perceived at the religiously reformist court of Akhenaton. While it is impossible to know the answer, the fact that Rib-Hadda was forced into exile after numerous vain requests for Egyptian intervention suggests that the Lady of Byblos did not succeed in attracting the attention he was hoping for (see §6.5.0.1).

### 3.3 *Pre-Amarna Relations with Egypt*

Most of the letters of Rib-Hadda deal with current events in Byblos, but here and there they hint at the city's relations with Egypt before the Amarna period. These allusions are usually vague, and although some may refer to real historical antecedents, the king of Byblos clearly used most of them as rhetorical devices to attract the Pharaoh's attention. This is probably the case both with the mentions of troops and supplies that Rib-Hadda states were sent to the city in the past<sup>55</sup> and with the reminders of his ancestors' loyalty towards Egypt.<sup>56</sup>

In this context, one passage stands out for its specificity. In *EA* 109:5–8 Rib-Hadda claims that “in times past whenever the king of Mitanni was at war with your ancestors, your ancestors did not desert my ancestors.”<sup>57</sup> The specific mention of the king of Mitanni, rather than of a general “enemy,” suggests that Rib-Hadda had some specific event in mind, but in his time Egypt and Mitanni were at peace, and relations between them had been good since the middle of the reign of Amenhotep II (Bryan 2000b, 73–79; Freu 2003, 55–90, in particular 72–73). However, Egypt had fought wars against the Mitannian empire in the time of Thutmose III and during the first years of Amenhotep II, some fifty years before Rib-Hadda. The fact that Rib-Hadda seems to refer

54 See Becking et al. 2001, 181. A notable exception is a ritual for installing a high-priestess found in Emar (Fleming 1992). The West-Semitic world contrasts here with both Egypt and Mesopotamia, where priestesses are well attested.

55 First Period: *EA* 76:31–33; Second Period: 112:50–51, 117:48–51, 121:11–17, 122:11–19, 124:46–47, 125:14–18, 126:18–23, 130:21–25, 132:8–18, 137:73–75.

56 First Period: *EA* 74:5–8, Second Period: 116:55–56, 118:39–44.

57 For instance: <sup>5</sup>*pa-na-nu* <sup>6</sup>[LUG]AL KUR *mi-ta-na* NU.KUR<sub>2</sub> *a-na a-bu-ti-ka* <sup>7</sup>*u<sub>3</sub> la-a* [*y*] *i-na-mu-šu-n[a]* <sup>8</sup>[*a*]-*bu-tu-ka iš-tu a-[b]u-t[i-ia]* (*EA* 109:5–8).

to past events that he cannot have experienced himself not only suggests that the Levantine king was aware of the political history of his city,<sup>58</sup> but it may also indirectly confirm the city's direct involvement in Egypt's wars in Syria and hence it may corroborate what emerges from the analysis of the Egyptian sources of the time of Thutmose III (§5.2.5). Moreover, if Rib-Hadda was aware of the strategic role played by Byblos in the establishment of the Thutmosid empire, it becomes clear why the apparent lack of interest of the Amarna court in the fate of the city may have seemed to him to be so incomprehensible (see further §6.5).

### 3.4 *Trade in the Letters of Rib-Hadda*

The Amarna letters also provide information about trade between Byblos and Egypt. In particular, in *EA* 77:6–15 (First Period) Rib-Hadda claims that he does not have the copper and *š/sinnu* (ivory?)<sup>59</sup> requested by the Pharaoh, while in *EA* 126:4–6 (Second Period) an Egyptian request for boxwood is mentioned. Although in *EA* 77:6–15 (First Period) the Lady of Byblos was involved in the city's trade, as attested already at the time of Thutmose III (5.2.5.2), it is noteworthy that none of the letters contains a mention of Byblian conifer wood, which is so prominent in the Egyptian sources. Even the wood mentioned in *EA* 126:4–6 (Second Period) is not wood from Byblos, but from Ugarit and the land of Salkhi. Thus, the king of Byblos was both trading directly with Egypt and acting as middleman between Egypt and other northern Syrian regions.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, as appears from various letters, the war with Amurru caused a shortage of grain in the city, and the people of Byblos had to import it from Yarimuta,<sup>61</sup> another coastal region or city.<sup>62</sup> According to Rib-Hadda, the

58 A detail that recalls the “scroll” with the records of previous interactions with Egypt read by the king of Byblos Zeker-Ba'al to Wenamun (Schipper 2005, 2005, 68, 2,8–2,9), although it is clear that the *Tale of Wenamun* should be used with caution, as it is a much later and above all a fictional source. Still, it would not be surprising that some form of archive existed in the city at the time of Rib-Hadda, and that in general such past wars survived in the memory of the city's elite.

59 Probably “ivory” (*CAD* 17.3, 48; Billigmeier 1988, 323), possibly “crafted ivory” (Rainey and Schniedewind 2015, 1420–21); but see Moran 1992, 148, n. 2.

60 It is not clear why the Pharaoh did not address the king of Ugarit directly. However, the role and political position of that city at the time is disputed: some scholars think that it was a vassal of Egypt, while others believe that it was independent. Singer (1999, 626–27) showed that there is no definitive evidence for its having belonged to the Egyptian sphere of influence, but it may be anachronistic to speak of complete autonomy. The city was perhaps autonomous but aware of its subordinate status in relation to Egypt.

61 On Yarimuta and its possible identification see Halpern 2011.

62 From the First Period: *EA* 68:27–28, 74:15–17, 75:11–14, 81:38–41, 85:12–15, 90:36–39. From the Second Period: 112:27–30, 114:54–57.

situation in his kingdom was so desperate that his subjects had to pay for this grain with “their sons, their daughters”<sup>63</sup> and with “the furnishings of their houses.”<sup>64</sup> He also asked the Pharaoh several times for supplies,<sup>65</sup> but it is difficult to understand whether he was proposing to trade or was seeking a donation from the Pharaoh within the frame of their suzerain–vassal relationship.

These letters describe commercial interactions that are clearly different from those lying behind royal expeditions such as that led by Sennefri and celebrated in the texts of the time of Thutmose III. They reveal details of the normal running of the regional commercial network into which Byblos was certainly integrated (see also §6.3). This network did not involve only Egypt, and the Egyptians do not seem to have made any attempt to regulate or interfere with it. Rather, they interacted with it through Byblos and possibly through other cities: there is no evidence that Byblos had an exceptional status in this respect. The absence in the Amarna letters of any mention of royal missions to fetch wood and other products comparable to that of Thutmose III agrees with their absence in the contemporary Egyptian sources (see Bardinnet 2008, 243–48). In view of their religious significance and their particular association with the god Amun and the Temple of Karnak (see §5.2, in particular §5.2.5), the religiously reformist Amarna court might not have been involved in any such expedition. Since however these trading missions certainly had an impact on the economy and even on the political reality of Byblos, one may ask how this religious and ideological change in Egypt could have affected the city (see §6.5 below).

### 3.5 *Geopolitical Layout of the Kingdom of Byblos in the Amarna Period*

The letters of Rib-Hadda are also informative about the geography of his kingdom and the definition of its border, as noted above in relation to the sources of the time of Thutmose III (§5.2.5.1). These letters offer the opportunity to see how the situation had developed almost a century later. The most important topics are the two wars Byblos fought against Amurru. In particular, in numerous letters Rib-Hadda describes his enemies’ advances towards Byblos, while the account of his territorial losses makes it possible to sketch a reconstruction of the geographical structure of the kingdom and of its socio-political organization.

63 <sup>12</sup> *ga-am-ru* <sup>13</sup> DUMU.MEŠ-š<sub>u</sub>-nu <sup>14</sup> DUMU.MI<sub>2</sub>-š<sub>u</sub>-nu (EA 85:12–13).

64 <sup>13</sup> GIŠ.ME[Š] E<sub>2</sub>-š<sub>u</sub>-nu (EA 85:13). In general, from the First Period: EA 74:15–17, 75:11–14, 81:38–41, 85:12–15, 90:36–39.

65 From the First Period: EA 74:53–57, 85:16–22, 86:31–37. From the Second Period: 112:30–39, 113:48–49, 116:72–74.



In the following paragraphs I discuss letters from both the periods together, with the aim of defining where the borders of the kingdom were claimed to be and how big the associated area of influence was. The evolution of the borders themselves in and between the two periods is discussed in the following section (§5.4.6).

First, Rib-Hadda's correspondence shows that during the Amarna Age, the kingdom of Byblos was an independent polity controlling various towns and cities. Unnamed towns belonging to Rib-Hadda are mentioned in various letters from both the periods of his reign.<sup>66</sup> In some letters Rib-Hadda is instead more precise and mentions the name of a few specific cities that appear to be part of his kingdom or to be in some way connected with it. Two of these cities, Shigata (modern Chekka, ca. 25 km north of Byblos) and Batruna, (modern Batroun, ca. 15 km north of Byblos) clearly belonged to his kingdom. Concerning Shigata, in *EA* 71:22–31 (First Period), Rib-Hadda says: “And send me 50 pairs of horses and 200 infantrymen<sup>67</sup> that I may resist<sup>68</sup> him in Shigata until the coming of the (Egyptian) troops.<sup>69</sup> Let him not gather together all the ‘Apiru so he can take Shigat[a] and Ampî, and [...<sup>70</sup>].”<sup>71</sup>

The association of these cities with Byblos is also confirmed by *EA* 90:6–19 (First Period), where we read: “[He has taken]<sup>72</sup> all my cities; [Byblos] alone rem[ains] to me. I was in Shigata and I wr[ote] to [y]ou, ‘Give thought to [your] city or ‘Abdi-Ashirta will take it.’ [But] you did not listen to m[e. Then fr]om Batruna I wr[ote to yo]u, ‘Send men to ta[ke the ci]ty for you.’ [My] words went [u]nheeded, [and] they were [no]t taken to heart. Now they have [ta]k[en] my cities.”<sup>73</sup> It thus appears that Shigata belonged to Rib-Hadda, as he was

66 First Period: *EA* 69:15–18, 74:19–21, 81:6–9; Second Period: *EA* 106:45–47, 116:37–38.

67 Following Moran 1992, 140–41, n. 5.

68 *i-zi-za ... i-na pa-ni-šu*: lit. “stand ... in front of him”.

69 *pí-tá-ti* is a transcription of the Egyptian word *pḏty*, “troops”, specifically “infantrymen”, “archers”, possibly vocalised \*/pīdātə/ (reconstructed on the basis of *pḏt* \*/pīdə/ < /pīdat/, corresponding to Coptic *pīte*, and transcribed in Akkadian as *-pi-ta*; see Loprieno 1995, 38–39). The use of the Egyptian word shows that Rib-Hadda is here referring specifically to Egyptian troops.

70 Moran (1992, 141, n. 6) suggested something like “and he seized them” in the lacuna, on the basis of 76:23. Rainey and Schniedewind (2015, 447) instead translate: “Let him not assemble all the ‘apîru men and take the town of Shigata and the town of Ampî and seize the [hill co]untry where he can [take a stand]”. The concept is essentially the same.

71 <sup>22</sup> *u<sub>3</sub>* <sup>23</sup> *uš-ši-ru-na-ni* <sup>50</sup> *ta-pal* <sup>24</sup> *ANŠE.KUR.RA u<sub>3</sub> 2 me ERIN<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ GIR<sub>3</sub>.MEŠ* <sup>25</sup> *u<sub>3</sub> i-zi-za i-na URU ši-ga-ta* <sup>26</sup> *i-na pa-ni-šu a-di* <sup>27</sup> *a-ši<sub>2</sub> ERIN<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ pi<sub>2</sub>-ta<sub>2</sub>-ti* <sup>28</sup> *u<sub>2</sub>-ul yu-pa-hi-ra ka-li* <sup>29</sup> *LU<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ GAZ.MEŠ u<sub>3</sub>* <sup>30</sup> *yi-il<sub>3</sub>-qa URU ši-ga-t[a]* <sup>31</sup> *u<sub>3</sub> URU am-pi<sub>2</sub> u<sub>3</sub> [...]* (*EA* 71:22–31).

72 Based on *EA* 91:19, an exact parallel – see Moran 1992, 164, n. 1.

73 <sup>6</sup> *il<sub>3</sub>-qe<sub>2</sub>* <sup>7</sup> *ka-li URU.MEŠ-ia UR[U gub-la]* <sup>8</sup> *i-na e-de-ni-še ir-ti[-ha-at]* <sup>9</sup> *a-na ia-ši i-na URU ši-g[a-ta]* <sup>10</sup> *i-ba-ša-ti u<sub>3</sub> aš-ta-[par<sub>2</sub>]* <sup>11</sup> *a[-n]a [ka]-ta<sub>5</sub> mi-lik-mi a-na UR[U-ka]* <sup>12</sup> *[u<sub>2</sub>-u]*

planning to go there to defend it and to “resist” the forces of Amurru. Moreover, in *EA* 90:6–13 he reports that he did try to defend the city even though the Egyptians did not send any aid: this shows that his attempt to protect Shigata (*EA* 71:22–27) was mentioned not only to impress the Egyptians, but that it fell within his personal concerns, duties, and interests.

As for Batruna, in *EA* 81:6–11 (First Period), Rib-Hadda explicitly claims that the city is the only one remaining to him besides Byblos, as he had already stated in a previous letter, *EA* 79:21–29 (First Period). Like Shigata, Batruna was visited by Rib-Hadda, as appears from *EA* 78:17–19 (First Period) and from *EA* 90:6–19 (First Period; see above). In *EA* 90:6–19, in particular, the king of Byblos affirms that he wrote to the Pharaoh from the city, before it was conquered: “[He has taken] all my cities; [Byblos] alone rem[ains] to me. I was in Shigata and I wr[ote] to [y]ou, ‘Give thought to [your] city or ‘Abdi-Ashirta will take it.’ [But] you did not listen to m[e. Then fr]om Batruna I wr[ote to yo]u, ‘Send men to guard [the ci]ty for you.’ [My] words went [u]nheeded, [and] they were [no]t taken to heart. Now they have [ta]k[en] my cities.”<sup>74</sup>

The passage in which Rib-Hadda claims that “[He has taken] all my cities; [Byblos] alone rem[ains] to me,” which opens the paragraph, and the passage “Now they have [ta]k[en] my cities” closing it, confirm that both Shigata and Batruna in principle belonged to Rib-Hadda. Rib-Hadda refers to two other cities in ways that strongly suggests they were part of his kingdom. The first of these is Ampī, modern Enfeh, ca. 30 km north of Byblos and ca. 3 km north of Shigata. No detail is given about the political status of Ampī, but in *EA* 71:28–31 and in *EA* 76:17–20 (both First Period) Rib-Hadda mentions it in close association with Shigata, first claiming that both are threatened by the ‘Apiru of ‘Abdi-Ashirta (*EA* 71:28–31), and then reporting that they have both been captured (*EA* 76:17–20). The association of these two cities in Rib-Hadda’s words and concerns, as well as their geographical proximity, suggests that Ampī’s status was similar to that of Shigata and that it belonged to the kingdom of Byblos. Moreover, in *EA* 102:20–25 (Second Period) Rib-Hadda claims to be unable to go to Ampī, because Amurru has captured the city, which supports its association with Byblos. Since, as seen above, Rib-Hadda visited the cities belonging to his kingdom, the fact that he intended to go there may suggest that Ampī belonged to him as well.

*l yi-il<sub>3</sub>-qe<sub>2</sub>-ši* <sup>m</sup>IR<sub>3</sub>[-a-ši-ir-ta] <sup>13</sup> [u<sub>3</sub> l]a ti-iš<sub>3</sub>-me a-na ia-š[i u<sub>3</sub>] <sup>14</sup> [iš-t]u [U]RU baṭ-ru-na iš-t[a-par<sub>2</sub>] <sup>15</sup> [u]š-ši-ra-mi LU<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ ti-[na-ša-ru] <sup>16</sup> [U]RU a-n[a] ka-ta<sub>5</sub> a-wa-t[u-ia] <sup>17</sup> [u<sub>2</sub>]-u[l] tu-uš-mu-na u<sup>3</sup> <sup>18</sup> [u<sub>2</sub>]-u[l] t]u-ul-qu<sub>2</sub>-na a-nu-[m]a <sup>19</sup> [yi-il<sub>3</sub>-q]e<sub>2</sub> URU.MEŠ-ia (*EA* 90:6–19).

74 See previous note for transliteration.

The mention of a “magnate” (LU<sub>2</sub>.GAL) of Ampī is not incompatible with this possibility and does not necessarily mean that the city was independent: the “magnate” could, for example, have been Rib-Hadda’s local representative in Ampī. It is noteworthy that he calls him “magnate,” LU<sub>2</sub>.GAL, rather than “lord,” EN = *bēlu*, or “king,” LUGAL = *šarru*, the words used to refer specifically to kings of other cities.<sup>75</sup> The use of LU<sub>2</sub>.GAL to refer to the Pharaoh’s administrator in Sumur (see below) may support this argument.

Finally, a fourth city mentioned by Rib-Hadda could have belonged to his kingdom. In *EA* 74:19–26 (First Period), the king affirms that after the conquest of Shigata only three cities, Byblos and two others, remain to him. One of these “two cities” is clearly Batruna, as discussed above (*EA* 79:21–29 and *EA* 81:6–11, both First Period). The other city can be neither Shigata nor Ammiya, whose capture is announced in the same letter (*EA* 74:23–30). Ampī is also likely to be excluded, as it is located a few kilometres north of Shigata and thus farther from Byblos, so that it would probably have fallen into ‘Abdi-Ashirta’s hands before or together with Shigata. This interpretation is perhaps supported by *EA* 76:17–20, where Rib-Hadda affirms that ‘Abdi-Ashirta has attacked and taken both Shigata and Ampī. Ampī seems to be mentioned also in *EA* 72, which, however, is too fragmentary to be translated. Nevertheless, since Rib-Hadda seems to talk about these cities only when they are in danger, this reference could indicate that when this letter was written the city was already threatened, or even captured, by ‘Abdi-Ashirta. Thus, if we exclude Ampī, the only remaining candidate to be the fourth city is Bit-Arha, whose capture is mentioned a few letters later, in *EA* 79:21–29 (First Period). According to that letter, ‘Abdi-Ashirta first captured Bit-Arha and then started to move towards Batruna and Byblos. Rib-Hadda states (*EA* 74:19–26) that these two cities were at that point the only ones left to him. Since Bit-Arha was the last city captured by the enemy before Batruna, it is likely to have been the third town mentioned in *EA* 74:19–26. The location of Bit-Arha is not known. Gubel (2010, 122–23) proposes to locate it in the Arqa Valley, possibly not far from Irgata. He assumes that the name Bit-Arha is related to the name of the local river, known in sources from the time of the Crusades as Arche/Archis/Archas. This location, however, is quite far to the north and does not seem particularly convincing. Since ‘Abdi-Ashirta was moving southwards in his campaign against Byblos and since he conquered Bit-Arha after Shigata but before Batruna, it would

75 See for instance respectively *EA* 73:27, 74:26, 75:34, and *EA* 139:14–15, 140:10–12, the last two of these written by Rib-Hadda’s successor. In *EA* 140:11–13, the title LU<sub>2</sub>.GAL, “magnate,” refers to the Egyptian commissioner and is used in opposition with LUGAL, “king,” which indicates the leaders of the cities of Ammiya, Ardata, and Irgata.

be more logical to look for it somewhere between these two cities. However, I know of no modern toponym in the area that can be safely identified with the name Bit-Arha. The only possible, although very doubtful, candidate is El-Heri, a small town on the coast just ca. 1 km south of Shigata, on the way to Batruna. However, the change  $r-h > h-r$  required by this identification is unusual, and this match is no more than a suggestion.

To sum up, as is apparent in figures 5.3, 5.4 and fig. 5.5, all these cities are located in a relatively well-defined area north of Byblos. Among those mentioned by Rib-Hadda, these are the closest to Byblos itself. Not surprisingly, he describes them as the last cities conquered by the armies of Amurru on their march southwards. Since Rib-Hadda clearly claimed them, it is safe to assume that the original northern border of the kingdom was located somewhere north of Ampî, although it is difficult to say how far north. Rib-Hadda does not explicitly claim any territory beyond Ampî, but this does not necessarily mean that his direct or indirect political power did not extend further north. Indeed, the concern that he expresses for other cities in the area raises questions and needs attention.

A first group of more northerly cities consists of three towns, namely Ammiya, Ardata, and Irqata. They correspond respectively to modern Amioun, ca. 35 km north of Byblos, modern Arde, ca. 53 km north of Byblos, and modern Tell-Arqa, ca. 71 km north of Byblos. As is stated in *EA* 139:14–16 and *EA* 140:10–13, both letters of Ili-Rapih (see below §5.4.6), all these cities had their own kings,<sup>76</sup> which means that they could not belong to the kingdom of Byblos, but must have had some form of distinct – although not necessarily independent – political administration. Rib-Hadda also mentions the leaders of Ammiya and Irqata, although less directly, in *EA* 74:23–29 and *EA* 75:25–27,32–34 (both First Period). He does not mention any king or leader of Ardata, but he reports the capture of that city in *EA* 75:30–31 (First Period). Although these cities had their own kings, they were on the side of Byblos in its war against Amurru, as is evident from the latter's involvement in the murder of their leaders (*EA* 74:23–29, 75:25–27,32–34, as well as in *EA* 139:14–15, 140:10–12 by Ili-Rapih), and it is confirmed by Rib-Hadda, who describes them as “loyal cities of the King”<sup>77</sup> in *EA* 88:8 (First Period).

Furthermore, the presence of kings does not exclude the possibility that these cities were somehow subordinate to Byblos or in a relation of vassalage with it. Small kingdoms that were vassals of more important cities are well

<sup>76</sup> The letter actually claims that the kings of these cities had been killed by the leader of Amurru, but this obviously implies that they did have their own kings in the first place.

<sup>77</sup> [URU].KI.HI.A *ki-it-ti* LUGA[L BE-ia] (*EA* 88:8).



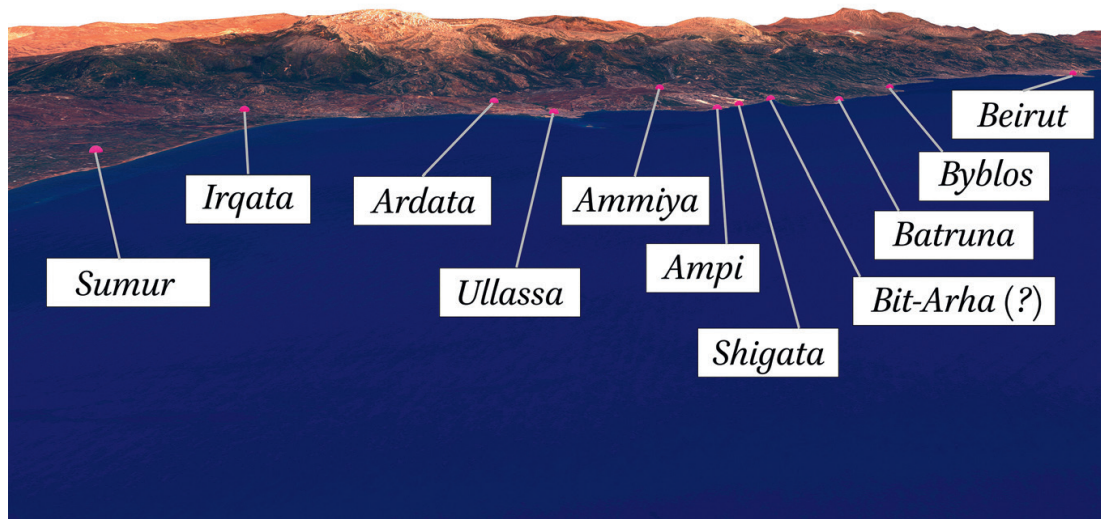


FIGURE 5.3 The northern Lebanese coast in the Amarna Age. The 3D model of the area has been created starting from satellite Landsat images and SRTM altimetry data [HTTPS://LIBRA.DEVELOPMENTSEED.ORG](https://libra.developmentseed.org) AND [HTTP://WWW.IMAGICO.DE/ MAP/DEMSEARCH.PHP](http://www.imagico.de/map/demsearch.php) – ACCESSED: 6.1.2017

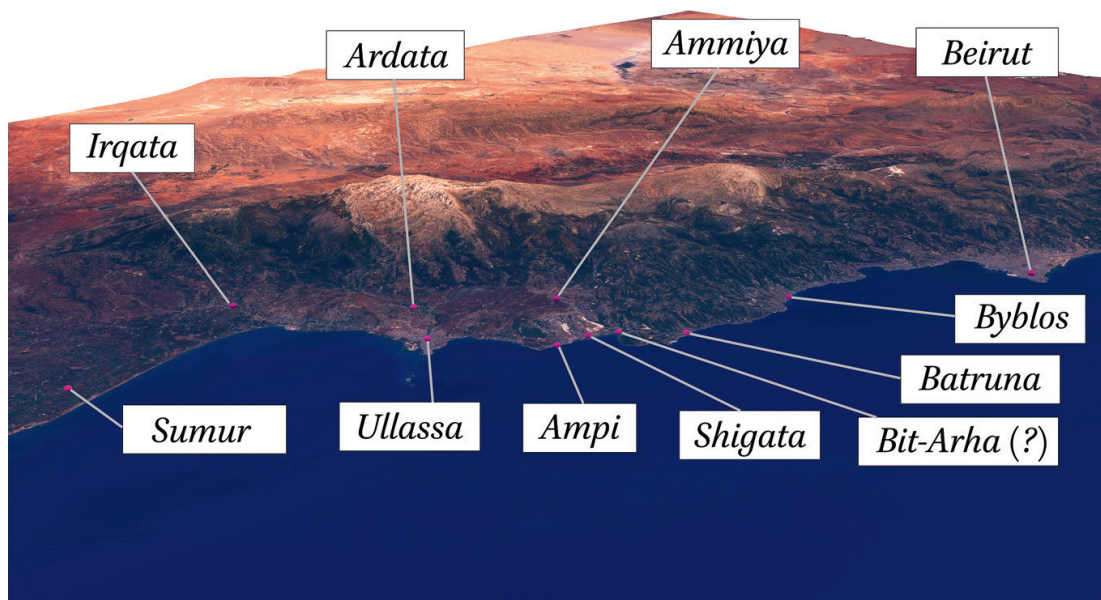


FIGURE 5.4 The northern Lebanese coast in the Amarna Age. The 3D model of the area has been created starting from satellite Landsat images and SRTM altimetry data [HTTPS://LIBRA.DEVELOPMENTSEED.ORG](https://libra.developmentseed.org) AND [HTTP://WWW.IMAGICO.DE/ MAP/DEMSEARCH.PHP](http://www.imagico.de/map/demsearch.php) – ACCESSED: 6.1.2017



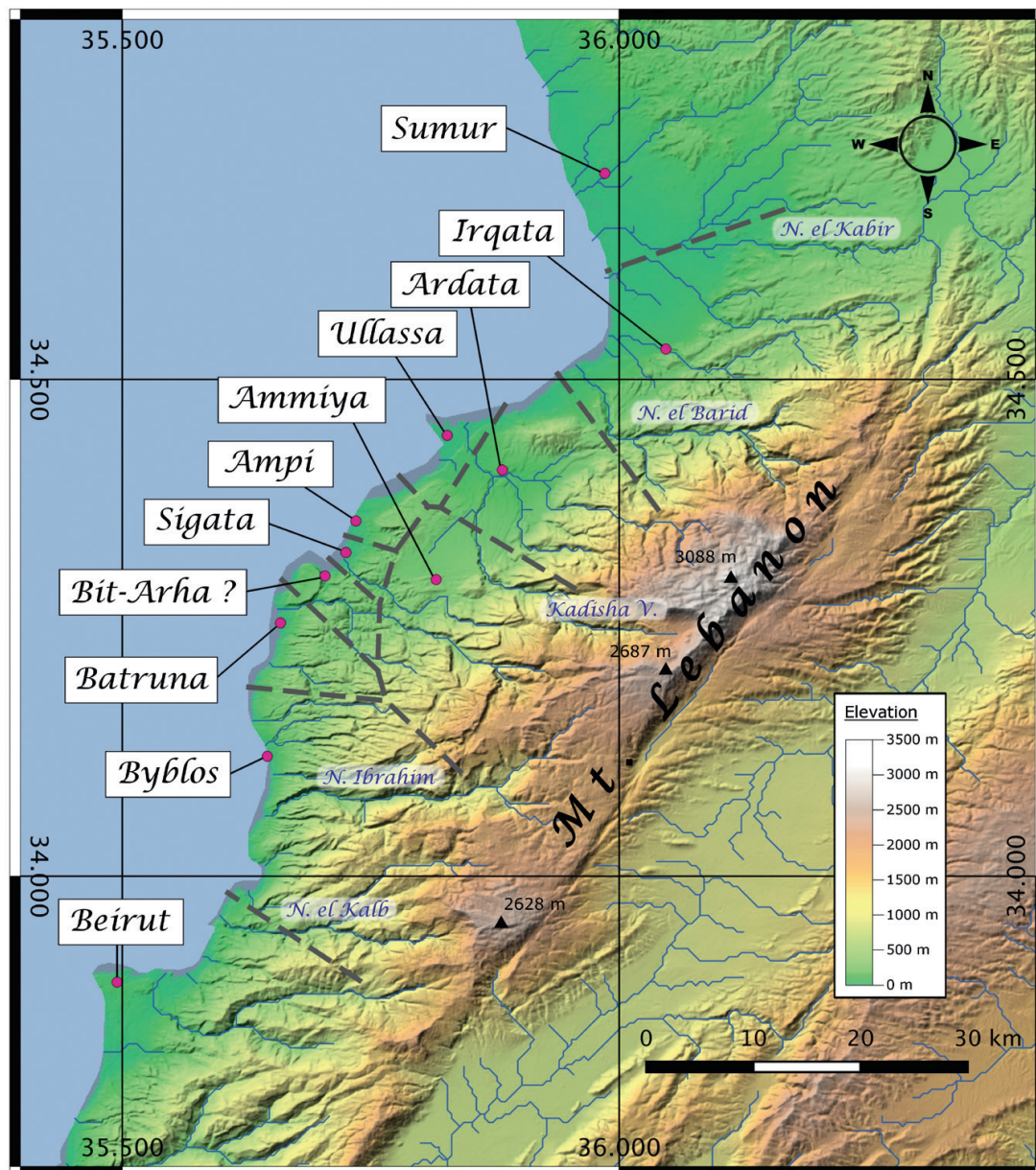


FIGURE 5.5 The northern Lebanese coast in the Amarna Age. The borders indicated in this map are a mathematical average approximation of the territory that each city could have controlled. They have been obtained through a Voronoi tessellation, a mathematical procedure consisting in the partitioning of a plane into regions based on average distance to points. Thus, they do not necessarily represent the reality on the terrain (the available data are too scarce to reconstruct it with precision), but they simply suggest a mathematically ideal territory for each city. Interestingly, in some cases, these theoretical borders do seem to match with geographical features that could have indeed played the role of real geographical boundaries. Examples are: the border between Byblos and Beirut, which is approximately located at the Nahr El-Kalb valley (see §4.9); the border between Ardata and Irqata, which roughly corresponds to the valley of the Nahr El-Barid; the border between Irqata and Sumur, in the area of the Eleutheros river, modern Nahr El-Kabir (which today still marks the border between Lebanon and Syria);

the border separating Ammiya and Ardata from the cities of the coast, which roughly corresponds to a series of low hills delimiting the western side of the plain in which the former are located. The map has been created starting from SRTM altimetry data, while the river network is based on WWF's HydroSHEDS data [HTTP://WWW.IMAGICO.DE/MAP/DEMSEARCH.PHP](http://www.imagico.de/map/demsearch.php) AND [HTTP://HYDROSHEDS.CR.USGS.GOV/INDEX.PHP](http://hydrosheds.cr.usgs.gov/index.php) – ACCESSED: 6.1.2017

documented in the area, for instance at Ugarit (see e.g., Singer 1999). Although there is no explicit mention of these cities being subject to Byblos, some clues may point in that direction. In particular, in *EA* 88:13–17, Rib-Hadda claims that he sent messengers to Egypt reporting the capture of his cities.<sup>78</sup> This could mean that he is reporting the fall of Ammiya, Ardata, and Irqata and the murders of their rulers because they were vassals of his, and in that sense “his cities.” It is relevant here that no letter from Ammiya or Ardata was found at Amarna. As for Irqata, only one letter is known, *EA* 100, and that is from its “elders,”<sup>79</sup> not from its king. This rather unusual letter will be discussed further later. This lack of correspondence may be significant since, as the fate of their leaders shows, these cities were directly involved in the war with Amurru and therefore had every reason to call for Egyptian intervention, as Rib-Hadda was doing. Although it cannot be excluded that such letters were indeed present at Amarna and have not survived or have not been found, this absence could also indicate that these cities were not on the same political level as Byblos and other major cities, being characterised by a subordinate, possibly vassal, status. If so, Byblos might well have played some role in their exterior relations, including their diplomatic interactions with Egypt.

The strongest evidence in favour of this interpretation, at least for Irqata, comes from the only letter from this city found at Amarna. *EA* 100, apparently written just after the death of ‘Abdi-Ashirta,<sup>80</sup> is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it was written by the “elders” of Irqata, rather than by its king. This is very unusual, and could indicate that the letter was composed after the murder of Aduna, the king of the city. More significant, however, is its second characteristic, namely its physical appearance. Several scholars have pointed out that the script, the physical features, and even the language of *EA* 100 look suspiciously similar to those of the king of Byblos.<sup>81</sup> Whatever the reasons behind these

78 <sup>13</sup> [š<sub>a</sub><sub>2</sub>-ni-t]<sub>am</sub> aš-tap-par<sub>2</sub> LU<sub>2</sub>.DUMU.KIN-ia i-nu-ma <sup>14</sup> [il<sub>3</sub>-q]<sub>e</sub><sub>2</sub> URU.KI.HA<sub>2</sub>-ia (*EA* 88:13–14).

79 š<sub>i</sub>-bu-ti-š<sub>i</sub> (*EA* 100:4) – see Moran 1992, 173, n. 1.

80 As it mentions both the war against him (20–32) and that the sons of ‘Abdi-Ashirta are planning to get their revenge (11–19).

81 Knudtzon et al. 1915, 1194; Klengel 1969, 196; Singer 1991, 149, n. 17; Moran 1992, 173, n. 5. Klengel even wonders whether the letter could have been sent from Byblos in the name

similarities are, they indicate a strong administrative (and thus political?) and perhaps even cultural dependence of Irqata on Byblos. I see two possible explanations for this connection: *EA* 100 was written in a Byblian style” either because Irqata was traditionally a vassal city of Byblos,<sup>82</sup> or because Byblos took advantage of the death of king Aduna to step in and install some form of (at least administrative) control over it. Whatever that control was, however, it cannot have lasted long, as in *EA* 103:9–13, a letter dating to the Second Period, Irqata is explicitly said to belong to the Egyptian magnate, that is, to the local Egyptian governor.

To sum up, Irqata seems to have passed through at least three distinct political phases during the period covered by the Amarna letters. First it was ruled by a king, but he was killed during the First Period, at the time of ‘Abdi-Ashirta. Then the city must have been ruled for some time by its elders, probably with some kind of Byblian influence or interference. Finally, during the Second Period the city appears to have “belonged” to the Egyptian magnate and was perhaps under direct Egyptian administration. Various interpretations for these developments can be put forwards.

A first possibility is that king Aduna was a vassal of Byblos, and Rib-Hadda intervened in support of the elders of the city after he was murdered, either already before or possibly only after the defeat of ‘Abdi-Ashirta. Alternatively, Byblos could have taken advantage of a power vacuum to take control of a previously independent city. The role played by the Egyptians is equally difficult to understand. In particular, it is not clear whether the city had always “belonged” to the magnate or whether the Egyptians stepped in at some point after the death of Aduna. Therefore, it is also not clear how the Egyptian intervention and Byblian influence should be read and interpreted together. What is certain is that Byblos was politically interested in Irqata and in the region north of Batruna, and it could have tried to take advantage of this political turmoil to reinforce its influence there. Since Ammiya and Ardata are relatively close to Irqata and all three lost their rulers in the same period, something similar may have occurred in them too.

In addition to Irqata, Ammiya, and Ardata, a fourth city needs to be listed here. This is Wahliya, which is mentioned twice by Rib-Hadda (*EA* 104:11, *EA* 114:12). The exact location of Wahliya is not known, although the area around

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of Irqata. This last possibility, however, can be excluded on the basis of the petrography of the tablet, which suggests it was produced in Irqata itself (Goren, Finkelstein, et al. 2004, 114, 122).

82 See Bietak and Czerny 2008 for a discussion of possible cultural links between the two cities emerging from the archaeological material.



and including Tripoli has often been suggested (Salamé-Sarkis 1975; Lipiński 2004, 286–87 with references). The letters give no detail about the ruler(s) of the city or its administration. We know only that Rib-Hadda was concerned about its possible capture.

Finally, two other cities need to be discussed here: Sumur and Ullassa. Various letters found at Amarna (*EA* 76:33–37, 103:9–16, 104:27–36, 116:8–12) indicate that Sumur was the main seat of the Egyptian authority in northern Lebanon, recognizing that the city belonged to the Pharaoh or to his administrator (called either *LU*<sub>2</sub>.*GAL*, “magnate,” or *LU*<sub>2</sub>.*MAŠKIM*<sub>2</sub>, “commissioner”). No king of Sumur is ever mentioned, no letter from a “King of Sumur” was found in Amarna, and Moran thought that even the “magnates” mentioned by Aziru in *EA* 157:9–12 are probably to be understood as Egyptian administrators and officers (Moran 1992, 243, n. 2; see also Rainey and Schniedewind 2015, 1507, following Moran). In *EA* 84:11–16 (First Period), Rib-Hadda affirms that Sumur hosted a bedroom and a treasure chamber belonging to the Pharaoh; the same royal buildings are probably also referred to by the people of Tunip, in *EA* 59:34–38. From these letters it seems that everyone recognised the Egyptian authority over the city, as represented in the person of the *LU*<sub>2</sub>.*MAŠKIM*<sub>2</sub>, “commissioner” / *LU*<sub>2</sub>.*GAL*, “magnate.”

A few other letters, however, seem to indicate that the leaders of Amurru and the king of Byblos believed they had some rights and duties towards the city. In particular *EA* 60:18–32, a letter from ‘Abdi-Ashirta, seems to imply that when the Egyptian administrators were not present, control over the city reverted to a local ruler, in this case the leader of Amurru – or at least, this is what ‘Abdi-Ashirta claimed. In *EA* 62:4–32, the idea that the absence of the commissioner legitimised the intervention of Amurru is argued also years later by Aziru, who asserts that he saved Sumur from an imminent attack by the troops of Shehlal (Location unknown: see Altman 1978, 103–7).

Still, the fact that in this letter Aziru is replying to an Egyptian accusation raises the suspicion that the Egyptians had different ideas about the matter. It is not clear, however, whether the Egyptians were arguing about the intervention of a local mayor in general or about the intervention of Aziru in particular. The evidence seems to support the latter possibility, appearing to indicate that the Pharaoh was expecting some of his vassals to support and participate in the Egyptian activities in Sumur. Rib-Hadda of Byblos, in particular, felt that he was particularly involved and needed to stress this point in his letters. In *EA* 102:13–19 he claims that the Pharaoh asked him to go to Sumur, while in the next letter (*EA* 103:9–22) he reports to the king that he has been in the city. He mentions a visit to Sumur, probably the same one, also in *EA* 114:26–31. Zimredda, the king of Sidon, and Yapah-Hadda, the king of Beirut, were also

supposed to go with Rib-Hadda or at least to help him (*EA* 103:17–19), but they ignored the letters from the Egyptian magnate. Rib-Hadda, by contrast, was a much more diligent vassal, or at least so he says. In *EA* 106:8–13, 41–45 he affirms he has been in Sumur, claims that the troops of Amurru have raided it but did not succeed in conquering it, and declares himself ready to march against Aziru with his army in support, or at the service, of the Egyptians (while adding that the Egyptians must supply the horses, twenty pairs). The same idea is repeated in *EA* 107:32–47, although this time Rib-Hadda asks for thirty pairs of horses and some chariots.

A few letters later, the Pharaoh asked the king of Byblos to get some of his messengers into Sumur. After initial hesitation (*EA* 109:56–57), Rib-Hadda reports the success of the mission (*EA* 112:40–56, 116:19–24) and points out to the Pharaoh that in the past he used to receive a reimbursement for similar missions (*EA* 112:40–56). It thus seems that Rib-Hadda collaborated actively with the Egyptians in matters relating to Sumur, but he expected something in exchange for his services – horses and chariots for his military support, as well as provisions for introducing the messengers into Sumur.

In addition, in *EA* 114:26–31 Rib-Hadda reports his attempts to encourage the troops in Sumur: “Look, I (must) keep writing like this to you about Sumur. Look, I did go and I strongly urged the troops to [guard i]t, but now they have abandoned it, [and] the garrison [has deserted].”<sup>83</sup> He does not specify whether those troops were local, Egyptian, or from Byblos. Earlier in the same letter (*EA* 114:6–11), however, he accuses Aziru of having captured some of the men from Byblos whom he had sent to Sumur. The presence of Rib-Hadda’s troops in Sumur seems to be confirmed by a later letter, *EA* 131:6–14, in which Rib-Hadda mentions the death of Byblian soldiers.<sup>84</sup> Although the context is not explicit, the letter seems to suggest that these troops died when Sumur was captured.

This feeling of participation in the political and military life of Sumur is expressed by Rib-Hadda also in *EA* 116:8–12, where he refers to the garrison there as “our garrison.”<sup>85</sup> In view of the passages cited above, it is reasonable to see this as another reference to the presence of Byblian troops in the city. Thus, Byblos not only gave strategic support to Egyptian administrative activities, but also probably had a military presence in Sumur itself. And if Byblian

83 <sup>26</sup>*a-nu-ma* <sup>27</sup>*ki-ma iš-[tap-]ru a-na ka-ta<sub>5</sub>* UGU <sup>28</sup>URU *šu-mu-ra a-nu-ma i-ti-lik* <sup>29</sup>*u<sub>3</sub> a[h-]ta-ni* ERIN<sub>2</sub>.M[EŠ] *a-na* <sup>30</sup>[*na-ša-ri-š*]i *u<sub>3</sub> a-nu<-ma> i-te<sub>9</sub>-zi-ib-ši* <sup>31</sup>[*u<sub>3</sub> pa-aṭ-ru*] UN-*tu<sub>3</sub>* (*EA* 114:26–31).

84 <sup>9</sup> ERIN<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ URU *gubub-li* (*EA* 131:9).

85 UN-*nu* (*EA* 116:11).



troops were involved, it is then possible that the Byblian king expected to gain some political or economic right in relation to the city. Rib-Hadda does not seem to be the kind of person who does things for free. This could also explain why Rib-Hadda feels able to criticise the Egyptian commissioner/vizier about Sumur. In *EA* 71:7–16, he asks the vizier Haya: “You are a wise man; the king knows (this) and because of your wisdom he sent you as commissioner. Why have you been negligent, not speaking to the king so he will send archers to take Sumur?”<sup>86</sup> Rib-Hadda, however, is not the only one who complains to the Egyptians. In *EA* 98:1–9 it is Yapah-Hadda of Beirut who accuses the Egyptian commissioner Yanhamu of having been “neglectful of Sumur,”<sup>87</sup> and as a consequence “all lands from Byblos to Ugarit have become enemies in the service of Aziru.”<sup>88</sup>

Thus, to sum up, we have:

- the local rulers recognizing that the city of Sumur belongs to the Pharaoh, and mentioning his residence and his treasure chamber there (First Period).
- the leaders of Amurru claiming that when the Egyptian commissioner was not in Sumur, it is them who guarded the city and its resources (First and Second Period).
- the Pharaoh and the Egyptian commissioner directing some vassals (Byblos, Beirut, and Sidon) to go to Sumur, possibly to support the city (Second Period).
- Rib-Hadda king of Byblos offering to send troops to protect the city and to fight those whom he considered enemies of the Pharaoh (Second Period).
- the Pharaoh asking Rib-Hadda to get some messengers into Sumur (Second Period).
- Rib-Hadda being in Sumur and encouraging the troops there to resist the advance of Amurru (Second Period).
- Rib-Hadda reporting that some of the Byblian men (soldiers?) he sent to Sumur have been captured, and others killed, possibly when the city has fallen into the hands of Aziru (Second Period).
- Rib-Hadda talking about the garrison in Sumur as “our” garrison (Second Period).

It is difficult to combine and interpret all these elements. I suggest that the evidence points to a form of Egyptian control relying on the support of local

86 <sup>7</sup> *a-mur at-ta* LU<sub>2</sub> *em-qu*<sub>2</sub> <sup>8</sup> *i-di* LUGAL *u<sub>3</sub> i-na im-<qu<sub>2</sub>>-ti-ka* <sup>9</sup> *iš-ta-par<sub>2</sub>-ka* LUGAL-*ru* <sup>10</sup> *i-na* LU<sub>2</sub>.MAŠKIM<sub>2</sub> *a-na mi-nim* <sup>11</sup> *qa-la-ta u<sub>3</sub> la-a* <sup>12</sup> *ti-iq-bu a-na* LUGAL-*ri* <sup>13</sup> *u<sub>3</sub> yu-wa-ši-ru-na* <sup>14</sup> ERIN<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ *pi<sub>2</sub>-ta<sub>2</sub>-ti u<sub>3</sub>* <sup>15</sup> *ti-il<sub>3</sub>-te<sub>9</sub>-qu<sub>2</sub>-na* <sup>16</sup> URU *šu-mu-ra* (*EA* 71:7–16).

87 <sup>3</sup> *qa-la-ta* <sup>4</sup> *iš-tu* URU *šu-mu-ra* (*EA* 98:3–4).

88 <sup>4</sup> *i-nu-ma* <sup>5</sup> *na-ak-ra-at-mi* <sup>6</sup> *gab<sub>2</sub>-bi* KUR.MEŠ *ar-ki* <sup>7</sup> *ma-zi-ri iš-tu* <sup>8</sup> URU *gu-ub-li*<sup>K1</sup> <sup>9</sup> *a-di* URU *u<sub>2</sub>-ga-ri-ti* (*EA* 98:4–9).

rulers, either with the city being administered by the Egyptians when the commissioner of the Pharaoh was there and being entrusted to a local vassal when he was away, or in some sort of joint administration in which local rulers were required to support the Egyptian administration in its aims and needs. Something between these two options is also possible.

Whatever the situation was, Rib-Hadda may have aimed to be the main collaborator of the Egyptian administration, while the leaders of Amurru tried to take his place. The reasons for such collaboration could have varied. As the implicit request of Rib-Hadda for reimbursement suggests (*EA* 112:50–56), helping the Egyptians and working for them could have been lucrative.<sup>89</sup> In addition, the presence of an Egyptian garrison in the area gave local rulers who succeeded in ingratiating themselves with the Egyptian administration some strategic advantages, as well as possibly some stability and increased political power.

This possibility is implied by Rib-Hadda in *EA* 122:9–19:<sup>90</sup> “As to the king’s saying, ‘Guard yourself,’ consider that previously, in the days of my ancestors, there was a garrison of the king with them and property of the king was at their disposal, but as far as I am concerned, there are no provisions from the king at my dis[pos]al, and there is no garrison of the king with me.”<sup>91</sup> It is clear from this letter that Rib-Hadda hopes to have an Egyptian garrison in Byblos to use it for his own security and, probably, for his own interests.

The main interest in such a collaboration, however, is probably the one suggested by ‘Abdi-Ashirta in *EA* 60:21–29: if it is true that a local ruler could be entrusted to guard the harvest – and probably other resources – of Sumur and of lands under direct Egyptian administration when the Egyptian commissioner was away, there would be a clear economic value in such a collaboration. In addition, Sumur was located on the Mediterranean coast just south of Ugarit,<sup>92</sup> and not far from the mouth of the Eleutheros/Nahr El-Kabir river and its valley, one of the main access points to Syria. Sumur thus was in a very strategic and advantageous position within the regional and international trade network, as

89 This is also the opinion of Morris (2005, 224–25).

90 *EA* 121:7–17 and *EA* 130:14–30 present similar statements.

91 <sup>9</sup> *i-nu*[-*m*] *a yi-qa-bu* LUGAL-*ru* <sup>10</sup> *u*<sub>2</sub>[-*šu*] *r-mi ra-ma-an-ka* <sup>11</sup> *a-m*[*ur pa*]-*na-nu i-na* <sup>12</sup> UD[. KAM<sub>2</sub>].MEŠ *a-bu-ti-ia* <sup>13</sup> LU<sub>2</sub>.M[EŠ] *ma-ša-ar<-ti>* LUGAL <sup>14</sup> *i*[*t-t*]*i-šu-nu u*<sub>3</sub> *mi-im-mi*<sub>3</sub> <sup>15</sup> LUGAL UGU[-*š*]*u-nu u*<sub>3</sub> *an-nu-u*<sub>2</sub> <sup>16</sup> *a-na-ku ia-nu b*[*a*]-*la-aṭ* <sup>17</sup> LUGAL-*ri i*[-*li*]-*ia u*<sub>3</sub> <sup>18</sup> *ia-nu* LU<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ *ma-ša-ar-ti* <sup>19</sup> LUGAL-*r*[*i*] *i*[*t*]-*ti-ia* (*EA* 122:9–19).

92 See *EA* 98:3–9, where Yapah-Hadda, the king of Beirut, affirms that after the fall of Sumur, all the land from Ugarit to Byblos belongs to Amurru. This can be taken as meaning that Sumur was the last polity before Ugarit, that is, that the territory of Sumur extended as far north as the southern border of Ugarit.

the Egyptians no doubt recognised. Moreover, the city is located in the Akkar plain, and the land around it is particularly well suited for agriculture. Finally, if one considers that the territory held by the Egyptian commissioner did not stop at Sumur but, as I argue below, may have included other cities, the advantages would have been even greater.

Another city that deserves attention is Ullassa. Like Irqata, Ullassa may have been directly controlled by the Egyptians, at least during the Second Period. In particular, in *EA* 104:27–36, Rib-Hadda accuses Aziru of having taken the cities of the commissioner, going on to affirm that he has taken Ullassa. Moreover, in *EA* 105:83–85, Rib-Hadda mentions the presence of Egyptians in the city, although he does not give any information about their function or activities there. In addition, in *EA* 60:18–29 ‘Abdi-Ashirta claims to guard both Sumur and Ullassa when the commissioner is on a mission, which may imply an administrative link between the two cities. All these mentions come from the Second Period. In the First Period, ‘Abdi-Ashirta claims to “guard” Ullassa (*EA* 60:22–23),<sup>93</sup> but this is probably the result of his recent conquests. Nothing is said about the previous political situation of the city. What seems to be clear is that there was no king in Ullassa, as no king is mentioned anywhere, and no letter written from Ullassa was found at Amarna. It is therefore very likely that the city was not independent.<sup>94</sup>

The Amarna letters include no mention of an Egyptian garrison stationed in Ullassa, unlike what has been inferred from sources of the reign of Thutmose III (§5.2.5). At the same time, the latter sources do not mention an Egyptian presence in Sumur, still less a garrison there.<sup>95</sup> These two points, which are probably connected, can be explained on the assumption that between the time of Thutmose III and the period of the Amarna letters the Egyptians moved their garrison from Ullassa to Sumur, turning the latter into their new administrative centre in the area. Such a move would make strategic sense: at the beginning, at the time of Thutmose III, when the Egyptians were still newcomers in the area, it was safer to establish their military and administrative base at Ullassa, in a relatively protected area not far from Byblos, a loyal ally. Once their grip on the region had been consolidated, however, it could have been advantageous

93 <sup>22</sup>*a-na-ša-ar* <sup>23</sup>URU *šu-mu-ri* URU *ul-la-sa*<sub>3</sub> (*EA* 60:22–23).

94 In fact, the last known king of Ullassa is the one captured by Thutmose III (*Urk* IV 685,8–686,10, in particular 686,4 – see §5.2.5).

95 Apart from the Amarna letters, Sumur appears only twice in the New Kingdom Egyptian sources: once in the annals of Thutmose III, where it is just said that the city has been “reached” (*spr*) by the Egyptian army (*Urk* IV 689,13) and once during the Nineteenth Dynasty, in Pap. Anastasi I 18:8, where Sumur is just mentioned among other coastal cities.

to move their centre northwards to a more strategically convenient position, such as Sumur. This change must have occurred between the last years of Thutmose III and the beginning of the Amarna correspondence, but it may be impossible to say exactly when it happened.

The only possible clue to this change comes in three letters of Rib-Hadda,<sup>96</sup> in which he affirms that his ancestors had an Egyptian garrison with them, whereas he does not have any. This reference could indicate that in previous times there had been a garrison located much closer than Sumur, possibly within the Byblian territory. The garrison in Ullassa mentioned in the Egyptian sources of the time of Thutmose III is a tempting possibility, especially since such sources do seem to suggest that Ullassa may have been part of the kingdom of Byblos or in the Byblian sphere of influence (§5.2.5). However, even if this is what Rib-Hadda meant in these letters, it does not help in establishing when the Egyptian garrison moved from Ullassa to Sumur. It was before his reign, as he is speaking about his ancestors, but it is impossible to say how long before.

In conclusion, while there are uncertainties regarding the details of the dynamics and functioning of the geopolitical landscape emerging from the letters discussed here, it is at least possible to sketch them. First, in the Amarna period the kingdom of Byblos did not consist only of the city of Byblos itself but included at least four other cities: Shigata, Batruna, Ampî, and a fourth one, possibly to be identified with Bit-Arha. These cities belonged to Byblos in the time of both 'Abdi-Ashirta and Aziru. Second, we have the cities of Ammiya, Ardata, and Irqata. In the time of 'Abdi-Ashirta these cities had their own kings and were therefore probably not part of Rib-Hadda's domain. Their level of independence, however, is difficult to determine, and they may have been related in some way, and possibly subordinated, to the kingdom of Byblos. Whatever their relations were, the kings of these cities were aligned with the anti-Amurru position held by the king of Byblos and so were probably politically allied with him. The city of Wahliya, possibly in the area of Tripoli, also attracted the concern of Rib-Hadda, but the sources are insufficient to say anything about its political situation. The friendly area defined by these cities would thus correspond quite well with that suggested for the time of Thutmose III (see §5.2.5).

The letters do not reveal anything about the status of these cities at the time of Aziru, except that Irqata seems to have passed under the authority of the Egyptian commissioner at some point after the death of 'Abdi-Ashirta. Ullassa probably had a similar status, at least during the Second Period; the letters are

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96 EA 121:11–17, 122:11–19, 130:21–25.

instead silent about its status during the time of 'Abdi-Ashirta. Finally, Sumur was the seat of the regional Egyptian authority, but clues suggest that a local ruler was involved, or tried to get involved, in the Egyptian administration of the city and its territories. Figures 5.6 and 5.7 summarise the situation just described, distinguishing between the beginning of the period of 'Abdi-Ashirta (First Period) and the beginning of that of Aziru (Second Period). The evolution of the borders of Byblos and of its neighbours during the Amarna period is presented in more detail in the following section (see also §6.2).

### 3.6 *Evolution of the Borders and Political Structure of the Kingdom of Byblos in the Amarna Period*

The northern borders of the kingdom of Byblos moved more than once during the Amarna Age. The primary cause of these changes was the expansionist policies of the neighbouring kingdom of Amurru. The history of Amurru is known only from written sources found outside the kingdom, as its core territory is still largely archaeologically unexplored (see Singer 1991, 135; the situation has not changed since then). These sources are limited,<sup>97</sup> but it is nonetheless possible to sketch the main lines of its historical and political development. The Amarna letters, especially those of Rib-Hadda, are vital for understanding its emergence and establishment. The Amarna period was a formative phase for this small highland kingdom (Singer 1991, 139): under the leadership of 'Abdi-Ashirta it started to expand from its original location in the mountains east of modern Tripoli, becoming one of the main actors on the regional scene in a few decades (Singer 1991, 138–40; Goren, Finkelstein, et al. 2003, 1). This expansion of Amurru under 'Abdi-Ashirta can be followed not only through Rib-Hadda's letters, but also through the petrographic analysis of the tablets that the leader of Amurru sent to the Pharaoh. Goren et al. (2003, 8–9) have demonstrated that the Amarna letters from Amurru were made in several cities, the sequence of which runs from the mountains east of Tripoli to Ardata and then Irqata, reflecting quite well the sequence of military gains described in the letters themselves.

The letters of Rib-Hadda show in particular that in the beginning 'Abdi-Ashirta conquered Ardata and Irqata, consolidating his position in the area around modern Tripoli and in the Akkar plain. He then turned his attention to Byblos, starting to advance towards the city on a north – south route

97 A problem that is visible in the scholarship about the kingdom: although studies on specific aspects have been published, no in-depth investigation has been dedicated to Amurru. The point of reference is still Singer's historical appendix (1991) to Izre'el's work on the Akkadian of Amurru.



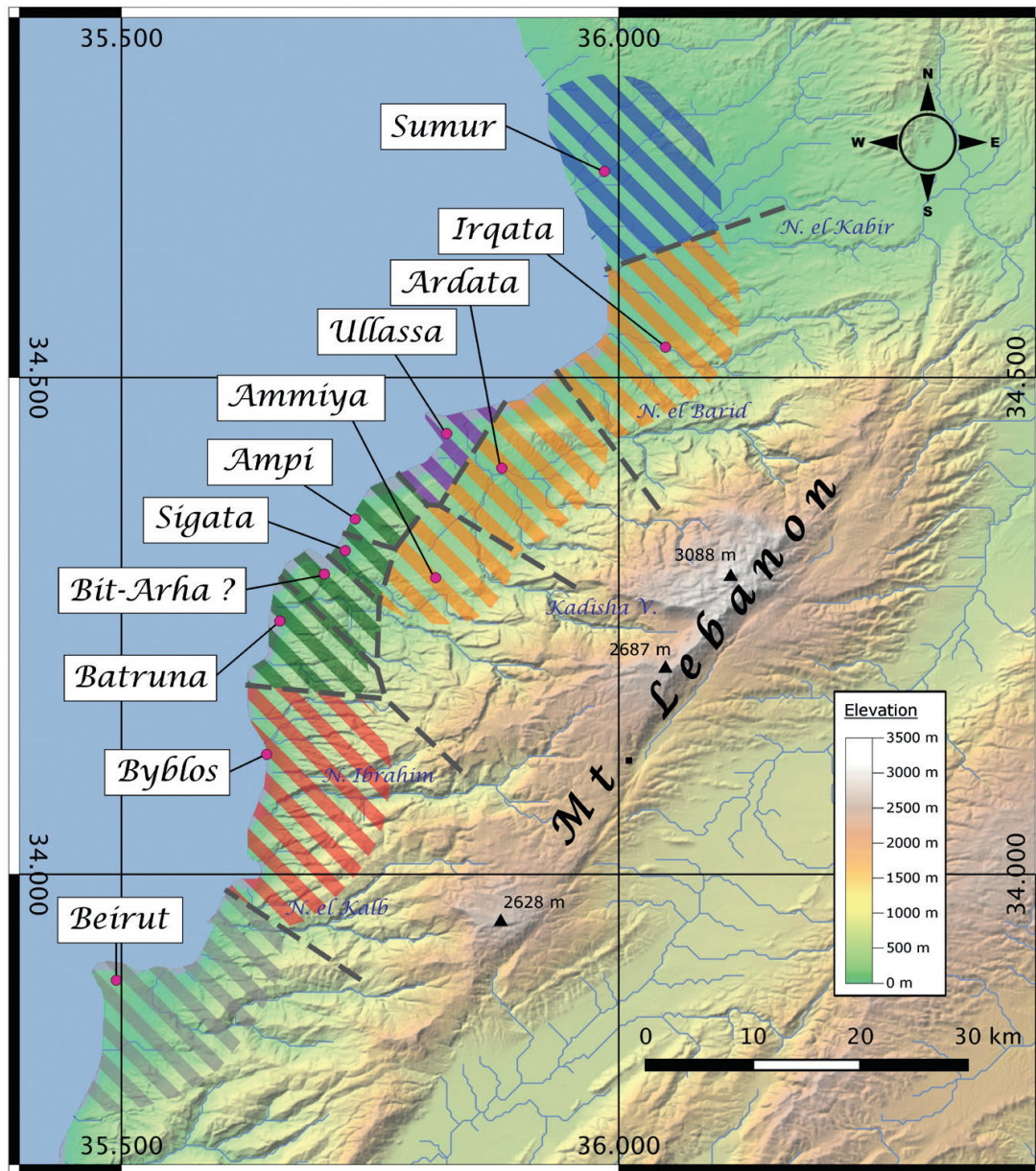


FIGURE 5.6 Geopolitical situation of Byblos and its neighbours at the beginning of the war with 'Abdi-Ashirta (First Period)

Red – Byblos

Blue – Sumur

Green – Cities belonging to the kingdom of Byblos

Yellow – Cities allied with and/or possibly vassals of Byblos

Purple – Cities whose political status is not known

Grey – Other cities

The map has been created starting from SRTM altimetry data, while the river network has been based on WWF's HydroSHEDS data

[HTTP://WWW.IMAGICO.DE/MAP/DEMSEARCH.PHP](http://www.imagico.de/map/demsearch.php) AND [HTTP://HYDRO-SHEDS.CR.USGS.GOV/INDEX.PHP](http://hydrosheds.cr.usgs.gov/index.php) – ACCESSED: 6.1.2017

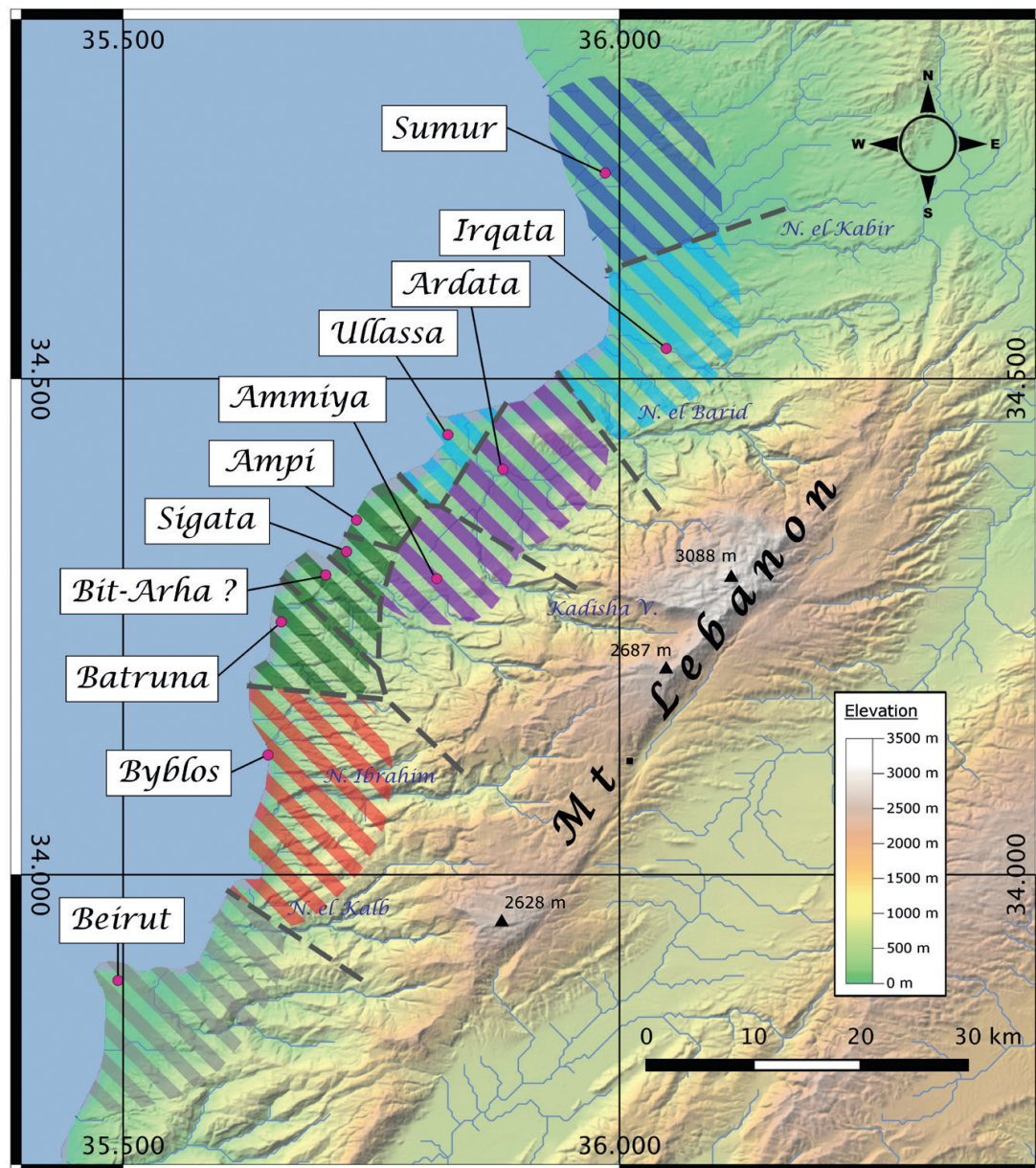


FIGURE 5.7 Geopolitical situation of Byblos and its neighbours at the beginning of the war with Aziru (Second Period)

Red – Byblos

Blue – Sumur

Green – Cities belonging to the kingdom of Byblos

Yellow – Cities allied with and/or possibly vassals of Byblos

Light blue – Cities said to belong to the Egyptian commissioner in Sumur

Purple – Cities whose political status is not known

Grey – Other cities

The map has been created starting from SRTM altimetry data, while the river network has been based on WWF's HydroSHEDS data

[HTTP://WWW.IMAGICO.DE/MAP/DEMSEARCH.PHP](http://www.imagico.de/map/demsearch.php) AND [HTTP://HYDRO-SHEDS.CR.USGS.GOV/INDEX.PHP](http://hydrosheds.cr.usgs.gov/index.php) – ACCESSED: 6.1.2017



along the coast. The cities of Ampî, Shigata, Bit-Arha, and finally Batruna were conquered successively by the armies of Amurru, while the population of the inland city of Ammiya, probably a vassal or ally of Byblos, rebelled against its king and joined Amurru after the fall of Shigata. ‘Abdi-Ashirta’s campaign against Byblos was so successful that by the time Rib-Hadda sent letter *EA* 90, all the territories of Byblos were lost, and Byblos itself was under siege. ‘Abdi-Ashirta, however, did not succeed in conquering the city. Instead, his death was perhaps announced by Rib-Hadda a few letters later, in *EA* 101:29–30,<sup>98</sup> and he had certainly disappeared by the time of *EA* 102:20–28, when Amurru appears already to be ruled by the sons of ‘Abdi-Ashirta. The causes of his death are not clear, and various hypotheses have been suggested (see summary in Singer 1991, 144–45). The only thing that seems to be established is that ‘Abdi-Ashirta died either during or just before an Egyptian intervention in the region. The arrival of Egyptian troops halted the expansion of Amurru and brought about a redefinition of the borders that seems to have favoured Byblos and restored its area of influence.

It is difficult to say whether these new borders corresponded exactly to those before the war with ‘Abdi-Ashirta. As seen in §5.4.5, the Egyptians seem to have used their military intervention against ‘Abdi-Ashirta to extend their own direct control in the region, especially in the area of Irqata. In *EA* 106:45–49, however, Rib-Hadda informs the king that some of his cities have deserted again just after the departure of the Egyptian troops. This suggests that his possessions and borders had indeed been largely or even completely restored through the Egyptian intervention, but it also shows that the newly restored control did not last long. In fact, soon after the death of ‘Abdi-Ashirta and the departure of the Egyptian forces, the sons of ‘Abdi-Ashirta took up the expansionist agenda of their father and resumed hostilities with Byblos. The letters of Rib-Hadda present this new war as developing in a similar way to the previous one: the armies of Amurru marched southwards again, conquering the coastal cities of the kingdom, and by the time of *EA* 124 only Byblos remained to Rib-Hadda.

This time, however, the events took a different course. The details and dynamics of what happened are difficult to grasp, both because the only source we have consists of Rib-Hadda’s letters, with their attendant biases, and because the Amarna correspondence as a whole stops soon after this point. A few decisive events are, however, clear, the most important of these being the exile of Rib-Hadda. The king of Byblos had already suffered at least two failed

98 Following Moran 1992, 174. Rainey and Schniedewind (2015, 553), instead, take it as a future, and interpret this sentence as Rib-Hadda’s suggestion.

attempts on his life, one at the time of 'Abdi-Ashirta (*EA* 82:35–39) and one at the time of Aziru (*EA* 138:39), and it seems that in the end his opponents managed to depose him. According to what Rib-Hadda says in *EA* 137:14–25 and *EA* 138:44–50, it was his brother who, taking advantage of the general discontent of the city due to the war and encouraged by the growing support for Aziru among the general population and the elite (*EA* 136:6–15, 138:49–50), allied himself with the leader of Amurru and usurped the throne. This version is corroborated by Ammunira, the king of Beirut, who states essentially the same in a letter to the Pharaoh (*EA* 142:15–24). Rib-Hadda was thus forced to flee the city and seek refuge at the court of Ammunira in Beirut (*EA* 137:14–15 and *EA* 138:20–21, 51–53, and also *EA* 142, a letter from Ammunira himself).

It is difficult to judge the reliability of this narrative. Popular dissatisfaction within the kingdom of Byblos<sup>99</sup> could have played a bigger part in Rib-Hadda's demise than he admits, as Pryke has suggested (2010, 143–71, 386–87). But since both 'Abdi-Ashirta and Aziru were accused many times of fomenting rebellions and not only by Rib-Hadda,<sup>100</sup> there may have been some truth in Rib-Hadda's words, and Amurru may well have been involved in the events. Rib-Hadda still tried to communicate with the Pharaoh from Beirut but, as he points out in *EA* 138, it seems that no one paid attention to him. What happened afterwards is not clear. According to a letter sent by the Pharaoh (probably Akhenaton) to Aziru (*EA* 162:7–21), the exiled Rib-Hadda asked Aziru himself to restore him back to power in Byblos. The leader of Amurru, however, did not help him and instead had him killed, possibly in Sidon. If this is true, Rib-Hadda may have thought that no help would come from Egypt and may have played his last card and tried to ally himself with his old enemy. In *EA* 162, however, the Pharaoh is just repeating the version given by Aziru, and it is clear from the general tone of the letter that the Pharaoh not only questions it but he also has severe doubts about the words and loyalty of the king of Amurru. The only thing we can be sure of is thus that Rib-Hadda died in exile, apparently through the agency of Aziru.

All we know of the person who usurped Rib-Hadda is that he was his brother.<sup>101</sup> Two letters found at Amarna have generally been ascribed to him (e.g., Moran 1992, 382). These are *EA* 139 and *EA* 140, which were sent by one Ili-Rapih.

99 Dissatisfaction and the danger of revolts are mentioned often in Rib-Hadda's correspondence, especially at the end of his reign; see e.g., *EA* 122:38–48, 123:18–22, 125:25–40, 127:30–34, 130:39–42, 134:16–20, 136:8–15 as well as *EA* 112:7–12, 114:21–22, 117:90 and 118:21–28, 36–39 for earlier and more general threats. See also Pryke 2010, 143–71, 386–87.

100 See for instance *EA* 59 from the people of Tunip.

101 Possibly with the support of other member of the family, as the mentions of previous episodes of dissatisfaction within the royal house in *EA* 136:8–15 seem to suggest.

The matter of Rib-Hadda's exile, however, is rather unclear. If we assume that Ili-Rapih was the usurper and place these letters after the exile of Rib-Hadda, then their content and their similarity with the letters of Rib-Hadda become surprising. Ili-Rapih writes to the Pharaoh asking for help and accusing the leader of Amurru not only with exactly the same kind of anti-Aziru claims, but also with the same rhetoric, the same examples and even the same formulations as Rib-Hadda. In other words, Ili-Rapih appears not only to agree with Rib-Hadda's policies but also to continue his epistolary practice, both in the content of his messages and in their form.<sup>102</sup> Yet one would expect a usurper who allied himself with Amurru to try to avoid the attention of the Egyptians.

Alternatively, these letters could have been sent before the exile of Rib-Hadda. In that case, however, one would need to ask what circumstances would have made Ili-Rapih to write to the Pharaoh in place of Rib-Hadda while the latter still was the king of Byblos. Perhaps Rib-Hadda was either away (in Sumur, Beirut, or somewhere else) or sick (as he affirms to be in *EA* 137:29–30).

It is also conceivable that Ili-Rapih was not the usurper and successor of Rib-Hadda. Ili-Rapih also appears in another Amarna letter, *EA* 128:20–25. This letter, which is too fragmentary to be translated, was written by Rib-Hadda, ending with a postscript added by Ili-Rapih (Moran 1992, 208, n. 1). We have seen in the case of the priestess of the Lady of Byblos that members of the city's elite tried to communicate with the Pharaoh through the letters of Rib-Hadda. These messages and the people sending them must have been approved by the king, so that the presence of a postscript by Ili-Rapih in a letter of Rib-Hadda suggests a certain closeness, rather than hostility, between the two. So who was Ili-Rapih? A possible candidate is suggested in two letters of Rib-Hadda from his exile in Beirut, in which he says that he has sent his son to Egypt to meet the Pharaoh (*EA* 137:36–37 and *EA* 138:75–78). Ili-Rapih could perhaps be this son of Rib-Hadda, who clearly played an active role in support of his father. If so, we would have no letter from Byblos after Rib-Hadda was forced into exile. This would make good sense: if the usurper truly allied and aligned himself with Amurru, he would not have needed Egyptian support and he could have favoured a pro-Hittite and anti-Egyptian agenda. Such a scenario appears more straightforward than previous interpretations and fits with the evidence of the letters, but the lack of additional information and the abrupt ending of the Amarna correspondence soon after these events leave the question open.

As for Aziru, he was luckier than his father: not only did he not die at the peak of his conquests, but he seems to have succeeded in consolidating his

<sup>102</sup> Although he seems to mix up the crimes of 'Abdi-Ashirta with those of Aziru – was this intended deliberately to discredit even more the leaders of Amurru?



position by switching sides at the right moment, leaving the Egyptian camp and pledging his loyalty to the Hittites. He probably changed allegiance before the end of the Amarna correspondence, by the time of *EA* 126, in which Rib-Hadda affirms that he is being attacked by Aziru and by Hittite troops (Singer 1991, 153). In *EA* 165 Aziru admits that the Hittites are already close.<sup>103</sup> While at some point the Egyptians started to doubt Aziru's loyalty (e.g., *EA* 162), the concerns and accusations they expressed in their last letters to Aziru were not enough to stop him. Since Rib-Hadda already mentions Hittite troops in association with Amurru in *EA* 126:51–66, it is likely that Amurru had been considering a shift in allegiance for some time. The turmoil of the end of the Amarna period provided the opportunity to act with little risk of retaliation. At this point Aziru disappears from the Egyptian sources, only to appear again in the Hittite ones, where one can follow his long and successful career under his new suzerain. With the end of the correspondence of Rib-Hadda, we are left without direct information on the location and possible shifts in the border between Byblos and Amurru. However, the evident general success of Aziru's politics make it likely that he did not lose any of the territories that he had conquered before he changed sides, and his conquests, and therefore his new borders, were probably recognised and internationally secured by the Hittites. This state of affairs is implicitly presupposed by the treaty between the Hittites and Aziru (Laroche 1971, *CTH* 49, obv. 27–30; Beckman 1999, 34; Kitchen and Lawrence 2012, i 419–38, no. 58, ii 47), where we read that the Hittite overlord committed himself to the protection of the territory of Amurru. More importantly, such a commitment is stated explicitly in a later treaty between Benteshina of Amurru and Hattushili III, the Hittite overlord of the time. In the historical preamble of Benteshina's treaty we read: "In the time of my grandfather Suppiluliuma, Aziru, [king of the land of Amurru], revoked [his vassalage(?)] to Egypt, and [fell] at the feet of my grandfather Suppiluliuma. My grandfather had [compassion] for him and wrote a treaty tablet for him. He wrote out the borders of the land of Amurru of his ancestors and gave it (the tablet) to him" (Laroche 1971, *CTH* 92, obv. 4–6; Beckman 1999, 95–96; Kitchen and Lawrence 2012, i 564–72, no. 69, ii 56–57). The text continues by saying that subsequent leaders abided by these terms. The borders of Amurru were thus recognised and probably explicitly defined when Aziru passed to the Hittite side, and they probably included the new border between Amurru and Byblos that had been defined by Aziru's conquests. Naturally, the fact that this

103 Singer (1991, 153) thought that this letter could contain an important chronological clue and that the meeting with the Hittites could have occurred during Suppiluliuma's "one-year" campaign to Syria in ca. 1340 BCE.

was the “official” border did not exclude Byblos from trying, possibly with the Egyptian support (Singer 1991, 155), to recover some of these territories. They probably succeeded only in the reigns of Seti I and Ramses II. Those northern conquests, however, were unstable and never lasted long (see §5.5, §5.6). The Egyptians finally gave up any claim on the area, Amurru included, when they ratified the Peace Treaty with the Hittite king Hattushili III, in year 21 of Ramses II. If at that time the borders between Byblos and Amurru were still those defined by Aziru, the ratification of the Hittite – Egyptian treaty must have extinguished any Byblian hope for or claim on those northern territories (see further §5.6, §6.2 and §6.6.5).

The drastic reduction of the extent of the Byblian kingdom’s territory at the end of the Amarna period was not only a political set-back but also had negative economic consequences. Some of these are explicitly described by Rib-Hadda in his letters. In *EA* 85:8–11 (First Period) the king of Byblos affirms: “since he (‘Abdi-Ashirta) has attacked me three times this year, and for two years I have been repeatedly robbed of my grain, we have no grain to eat.”<sup>104</sup>

A similar statement also occurs in *EA* 86:38–40 (First Period), while in *EA* 113:14–15 (Second Period) Rib-Hadda accuses his enemies of having looted his sheep and goats. The plundering of the countryside and consequent shortages seem to have been important concerns during both the wars with Amurru. The theme of lack of provisions appears quite often in Rib-Hadda’s correspondence. In six letters of the First Period he claims to have been forced by the war to buy provisions from the land of Yarimuta (*EA* 68:27–28, 74:15–17, 75:11–14, 81:38–41, 85:12–15, 90:36–39), while in *EA* 85:16–22, 86:31–37 (First Period) and 113:48–49 (Second Period) he asks the Pharaoh for provisions for himself and his loyal cities.

Provisions from the land of Yarimuta are also mentioned in a letter of the Second Period (*EA* 112:27–30), where it is not clear whether Rib-Hadda is speaking about the present or about an earlier event in the time of ‘Abdi-Ashirta. In any case, by the time of *EA* 114 (54–59) even Yarimuta was no longer accessible. One must bear in mind that Rib-Hadda deliberately presents himself as a weak victim in need of Egyptian help, as a “giusto sofferente” to use Liverani’s expression (1974; 2004), and therefore the magnitude of his claims and perhaps even their veracity should be taken with caution. Still, the area conquered by the leaders of Amurru in the northern part of the Byblian kingdom is particularly suited for agriculture and pastoralism, and it is likely that the city’s economy relied on it to some extent. It is impossible to say how Byblos was exploiting

104 <sup>8</sup> *a-nu-ma 3-ta-an i-zi-iz UGU-ia MU.KAM<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ* <sup>9</sup> *an-ni-ta u<sub>3</sub> 2 MU am-ma-ša-‘u<sub>5</sub>* <sup>10</sup> *ŠE-im. HA<sub>2</sub>-ia ia-nu ŠE-im. HA<sub>2</sub> a-na* <sup>11</sup> *a-ka-li a-na ia-ši-nu* (*EA* 85:8–11).

these territories, whether directly, by claiming some form of ownership of that land and its products, or indirectly, by imposing for instance some form of taxation on the vassal cities. Be that as it may, having them plundered and then losing them to Amurru had serious economic repercussions for Byblos.

Furthermore, agricultural products were not the only resource of that part of the northern Lebanese coast. The area north of Byblos was also covered by dense forests supplying wood and essences that were particularly valued in the international market, such as the Cilician fir, which may have grown only in this area (see §5.2.5). In view of the central role that timber and forest products played in the economy of Byblos, and especially in its relations with Egypt both during earlier periods and during the Eighteenth Dynasty, losing access to these areas must have had a serious negative impact on the city.

Finally, the fact that all the cities belonging to the kingdom of Byblos mentioned in the Amarna letters (Shigata, Batruna, Ampî) are located on the coast, while the inland cities enjoyed some independence and were probably linked to Byblos only by relations of alliance and/or vassalage (§5.4.5), suggests that the sea played a dominant role in the politico-economic setting of the kingdom. Fish and other maritime products<sup>105</sup> could be exploited both for local consumption and as a commercial resource. A long coast means numerous harbours, which generate revenues both in trade and possibly in dues on the trade itself.<sup>106</sup> Byblos lost all these resources in the war with Amurru and seems never to have recovered them (see §6.2). In addition, at some point during the Second Period Amurru and its allies appear to have imposed a naval blockade on Byblos (*EA* 105:14–16, 126:7–13) and conducted acts of piracy (*EA* 113:14, 114:15–20), events that would have hampered not only the movements of Rib-Hadda and his men but also the city's trade.

These problems must have deeply affected the economic stability of the city as well as its regional status as a political power, both during the war itself and in the following periods. Thus, the war with Amurru and the consequent shift in borders appear to have been a crucial watershed in the history and development of Byblos.

<sup>105</sup> Including, perhaps, purple dye. There is no attestation of purple production in Byblos at the time, but considering that the purple industry is attested in Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age (Curtis 1999, 21) we cannot exclude that it was known also in Byblos and that its archaeological traces have not been found, have not been recognised, or have been ignored.

<sup>106</sup> Such taxes are attested in Late Bronze Age Ugarit, and there is no reason to doubt that they were common all along the Levantine coast: Heltzer 1978, 130.

## 4 The Late Eighteenth and the Early Nineteenth Dynasties

No authentic written source from this period mentions Byblos. A bowl appeared on the antiquities market in 1972 bearing an inscription mentioning a campaign by Horemheb in Byblos. This inscription was however soon recognised as a fake, and therefore there is no need to discuss it (Yoyotte 1981, 44). Nothing specific, therefore, can be said about the city here. For a more general discussion of Byblos in this period in a larger perspective, see §6.6.4.

## 5 Ramses II and the Nineteenth Dynasty

Byblos reappears in the written sources of the reign of Ramses II. One text, Pap. Anastasi I, can be dated to the reign of this king (§5.6.1); a few other written sources belong to the same period or to the following few decades. Among these there are texts from Egypt (§5.6.2, §5.6.3), from the Hittite Empire (§5.6.4), and from Ugarit (§5.6.5).

### 5.1 *Pap. Anastasi I*

Papyrus Anastasi I<sup>107</sup> is the best preserved copy of the “Letter of Hori”, a Nineteenth Dynasty literary composition. The text was widely appreciated and copied (Gardiner 1911, 4\*), and is attested on four other papyri and at least seventy-six ostraca (Fischer-Elfert 1986, 1–4). The versions of Pap. Anastasi I and of the ostraca are slightly different and attest at least two textual traditions originating in Memphis and Thebes (Gardiner 1911, 5\*; Fischer-Elfert 1986, 261–67). A date of composition during the reign of Ramses II has been proposed based on internal evidence,<sup>108</sup> possibly before his year 21 because of the mention of Sumur, which passed to the Hittites before or at the time of the Egyptian – Hittite Peace Treaty (Fischer-Elfert 1986, 261–67). The copy on the papyrus, however, could have been written during the reign of Merenptah (Fischer-Elfert 1986, 261–67). The text is a satirical letter written by a scribe, Hori, to another scribe, Amenemope. The text has the form of a response to an ill-written letter by Amenemope, in which Hori tries to correct his colleague, arguing with him, giving him problems to solve and examples to follow, and

107 British Museum, Pap. BM EA 10247. Dimensions: 8.25 × 0.20 m. Publications and bibliography: Birch et al. 1842, pls. xxxv–lxii; Gardiner 1911, 1\*–34\*, 1–40; Fischer-Elfert 1986; Fischer-Elfert 1992; Schad 2006, 11–62.

108 Gardiner 1911, 4\*, Fischer-Elfert 1992, 261–67, Schad 2006, 59–61 because of the many references to Ramses II, in particular the mention of “Sumur of Sese,” that is, Sumur of Ramses II.

interrogating him about subjects in which he appears to be ignorant. The text was used to train scribes in schools (Fischer-Elfert 1986; Goldwasser 1991; Osing 1997). Within this epistolary frame, 14 “topics” representing the main domains of knowledge that a good scribe may have been expected to master are presented. The topics touched on are heterogeneous, ranging from a problem concerning supplies for troops to one concerning the erection of a colossus, from questions about classics of literature to general notions of foreign geography.

Paragraph XVII, preserved only in Pap. Anastasi I, deals with the cities of Lebanon, including Byblos. In 20:7–21:2 Hori says:

20:7 *sdd=j n=k ky dmj štʔ*

*r-dd kʔ-pw-nʔ rn=f*

*sw mj-jh*

*tʔy=sn ntrt ky sp*

*bw 20:8 dgʔs=k sw*

*mtr my r bʔ-rw-tj*

*r dy-dw-nʔ*

*dʔ-yr-pw-tj*

*pʔ hd 21:1 n nʔ-tʔ-nʔ tnw*

*jw-tw mj-jh*

*st hr dd ky dmj m pʔ yw-m,*

*dʔ-yr-n- 21:2 mrw rn=f*

*jtʔ=tw=f(sic!) mw m nʔ bʔyry*

*wsr sw m rmw r šʕ(y)*

I will tell you of another mysterious city.

Byblos is its name;

what is it like?

And their goddess, what is she like?

You have not set foot on it.

Teach (me), come to Beirut,

and to Sidon

and Sarepta.

Where is the stream of the Litani?

What is Uzu like?

They tell of another city in the sea,

Tyre-of-the-port is its name.

Water is taken over to it in boats,

and it is richer in fish than in sand.

The cities mentioned in this paragraph correspond to the main centres of the southern Lebanese coast. Hori distinguishes them from the preceding Syrian cities and the following Canaanite cities.<sup>109</sup> Both the *sdd=j n=k* at the beginning of the excerpt and the *sdd=j n=k* after it are rubricised, indicating that the passage is a complete section. One can wonder whether this presentation reflects a geographical reality or if it hints at a different cultural – proto-Phoenician? – identity.

Byblos opens the presentation, while the other cities follow from north to south. Despite its brevity, this passage is rich in information about the Egyptian perceptions of the area. Byblos and Tyre enjoy a special prominence evident

109 Syria and northern regions: Pap. Anastasi I 18:7–19:4; northern Palestine: 21:2–22:2; central Palestine: 22:3–23:1; southern Palestine: 27:3–28:1.



not only from their initial and final positions – which, in view of the north – south order could just be a reflex of their actual geographical locations –, but also from the way they are described: while Beirut, Sarepta, and Sidon are mentioned only by name, the main features of Byblos and Tyre are sketched. About Byblos, Hori says: “I will tell you of another mysterious city. Byblos is its name; what is it like?” The force of *štʔ*, “mysterious,” “hidden,” in this context is not clear. Perhaps this term refers to some religious or mystical event or association of the city.<sup>110</sup> Alternatively, Hori is perhaps using here this term in a sarcastic way, implying that Byblos was a city that a good scribe had to know and only a ignorant person would have considered it as “mysterious.” This would be akin to someone today asking “do you know the mysterious city of London?”, the irony and *ad absurdum* nature of the question, and therefore the intention of mocking the ignorance of the interlocutor, would be evident to everyone. In either case, a good scribe would have known what Byblos was, and Hori explains also why: “And their goddess, what is she like?” The local goddess, the Lady of Byblos, is the most important feature of the city, the only specific aspect the scribe mentions. It is noteworthy that Hori decided to direct the attention of the reader to the religious and divine side of the city, rather than towards more practically important features, such as its harbours or wood production. The mention of the goddess also shows that the Lady of Byblos still enjoyed prestige at the time of Ramses II, as is found in other written sources (especially Pap. BM EA 9997 + 10309, see §5.6.2), and agrees with the archaeological evidence: blocks of a chapel bearing the king’s name have been found in the city (§4.5), and a statue of the same general period mentioning the goddess was found in Egypt, possibly in the area of Deir El-Medina (§5.6.3).

Tyre is the only other city about which Hori gives details, which could point to its relative importance. It is possible that Byblos and Tyre are more elaborately described for rhetorical and stylistic reasons, as the first and last cities in this list, although no similar pattern can be observed in the other paragraphs. The majority of the forty-eight other Syrian or Palestinian countries and cities appearing in the papyrus are mentioned by name only in a list-like form, like the other southern Lebanese cities in the present passage (Pap. Anastasi I 18:7–19:4; 21:2–22:2; 22:3–23:1; 25:2; 27:3–28:1). Additional comments or more detailed descriptions are otherwise found only for the land of Upe (22:6), Joppa

110 It is known for instance that in later periods the city was renowned for some “miraculous” events taking place during religious festivals (see Lucian’s *De Dea Syria* 7–8; Lightfoot 2003, 250–53).

(25:2), and the unlocated land of *m-g-r* (19:2), whose rich forests are described, and which was probably not far from Byblos.<sup>111</sup>

In contrast with Byblos, no god or goddess is mentioned in Hori's description of Tyre, and no other Egyptian source points to any special religious connotation of the city. Hori describes it as a *mrw*, a harbour, and mentions its curious location *m p3y-w-m*, "in the sea," as well as stating that it is rich in fish. It is difficult to say if this last detail is a reference to a real and characteristic economic activity (as assumed by Katzenstein 1973, 53), a literary cliché, or a mix of both. Abundance in general, and of fish in particular, are well attested in contemporary "praise of city" genre (Ragazzoli 2008, 200–2), and the formulation in Pap. Anastasi I, *wsr sw m rmw r š'(y)*, "richer in fish than in sand," is very closely paralleled in Pap. Lansing 12:10 (Ragazzoli 2008, 86–87), where we read *š3 rmw r š'(y) n wdb*, "the fish are more numerous than the sand of the shore." Yet while other echoes of this genre may be present in Pap. Anastasi I, notably in the mention of gardens and blossoming flowers in Joppa (I 25:2–4), the majority of the cities are mentioned only by their name, more in the style of the onomastica (see Gardiner 1947; Herbin 1986; Fox 1986; Sidarus 2000). Moreover, our passage does not present any of the themes or structural and stylistic features of the genre (Ragazzoli 2008, 165–202). Finally, the word referring to the "richness" in fish of Tyre in Pap. Anastasi I is a derivative of the root *wsr*, whose primary meaning is "strength," "wealth," "influence," and consequently "richness." By contrast, the words used in praises of cities are generally forms of *š3*, whose meaning is more strictly connected with "abundance" or "multiplicity" in a quantitative sense. No word derived from *wsr* is attested in the corpus of praises of cities studied by Ragazzoli (2008).

It is well known that fish production and commerce were important in the economy of the ancient eastern Mediterranean.<sup>112</sup> Since Tyre was "in the sea," it

111 In particular, since the name could be linked with the Semitic root *m-g-r* meaning "cave," it has been suggested to identify it with the region of the Afqa cave, which in classical times was within the border of the territory of Byblos in the mountains to the east of the city and was known for its sanctuary of Adonis. Alternatively, it has been suggested that *m-g-r* could correspond to the plains of Makra, mentioned by Strabo (*Geography* 16:2.17–18; Roller 2014) and probably located between modern Batroun and Tripoli, just north of Byblos and potentially within its kingdom, at least in some periods (see §5.4.5, §5.4.6). See Gauthier 1925–1931, III 10; Fischer-Elfert 1992, 165 q.

112 See note below. The mention in the *Tale of Wenamun* of "30" and "5 baskets of fish" (Wen. 2:41–42; Schipper 2005, 81–82) sent by the Pharaoh to the king of Byblos could suggest that fish was indeed an exchanged good, at least during the reign of Ramses XI.

is likely to have had a developed fish industry, famous enough to be specifically mentioned in Hori's letter.<sup>113</sup>

Hori concludes by observing that water has to be brought to Tyre by boat, a detail that recalls two Amarna letters (*EA* 148 and *EA* 149) in which Abi-Milku, king of Tyre, reports that his city is without water because Zimredda king of Sidon has captured the city of Uzu.<sup>114</sup> Tyre on the island and Uzu facing it on the coast were interdependent, and this passage clarifies these letters and the seriousness of the Sidonian threat.

It thus appears that Byblos and Tyre were two of the few cities whose most salient aspects are described by Hori. This special treatment could suggest some particular prestige or renown in the eyes of the Egyptians of the time, or at least in those of the scribe and his readers.

## 5.2 *Pap. BM EA 9997 + 10309*

Papyrus BM EA 9997 + 10309 are two fragments of a single hieratic papyrus containing magical spells mainly against snakes.<sup>115</sup> The date of composition is not known, but on the obverse of the papyrus there is an administrative text of years 14 and 15 of Ramses XI (Leitz 1999, 1, n. 1), which gives an approximate date for this copy. The spells are related to later compositions of cippi of Horus and of healing statues. The central part of the text, between Pap. BM EA 9997 and Pap. BM EA 10309, is missing.

The papyrus preserves two mentions of the *nbt kbn*, the “Lady of Byblos,” both of them in Incantation 6, on the last surviving column of BM EA 9997. Only the beginnings of the lines of this column survive; the ends were destroyed by insects. The text describes Isis healing a young Horus who had been bitten by a snake while playing with his companions in the desert. Nephthys seems to be with Isis, and other goddesses are invoked during the magical treatment against the poison and the reptile. The two mentions are in Pap. BM EA 9997 VIII:5 and VIII:13 (Leitz 1999, 21, pl. 8):

113 Tyre appears to be associated with fish production and commerce also in the Bible (Ezek. 26:4–5; Neh. 13:16; see also Katzenstein 1973, 53 n. 53, 73, 163).

114 *EA* 148:26–34: “May the king give attention to his servant, and may he charge his commissioner to give Uzu to his servant for water, for fetching wood, for straw, for clay.” (Moran 1992, 235). *EA* 149:49–51: “(Still), Zimredda seized Uzu from <his> servant. I abandoned it, and so we have neither water nor wood.” (Moran 1992, 236). See also Katzenstein 1973, 29, 52.

115 Dimensions: 92.5 × 22.0 cm + 71.0 × 21.5 cm. Publication and bibliography: Leitz 1999.

## Passage A

<sup>4</sup> *mny n mny* [...] *nbt 3ḥ-bjt jn srqt*<sup>o</sup>

[...]

<sup>5</sup> *dd=j m nbt k3p[wny ...]*<sup>o</sup>

*mj 3s.tj m-ḥ3t mḥ[?...*

<sup>6</sup> *m33=tw* [...] *msw*<sup>o</sup>

[*j m*]*j t3w n nty ḥr* [...]

<sup>7</sup> *g3y ḥy* [...] *rnw* [...]

*m mḏww-nṯr*

X, born to Y. [...] lady of Chemmis  
by Selqet<sup>o</sup>

[...]

I said to<sup>a</sup> the Lady of By[blos ...]<sup>o</sup>

Come, being quick before ...?... [...]

are seen [...] children.<sup>o</sup>

[Gi]ve air to the one who [...] is [...]

constricted at the thro[at ...]

name(s ?) [...]

as divine words/hieroglyphs.

a. Written . I translate “to” following Leitz 1999, 21 who reads *n* for *m*.

## Passage B

<sup>13</sup> [...] <sup>o</sup>

*srqt ḥwt[-ḥr]*<sup>o</sup>

*nbt k3pwn 3st*<sup>o</sup>

*nb ḥwt*<sup>o</sup>

[...]

... name of a goddess.]

Selkis, Hat[hor],<sup>o</sup>

(the?) Lady of Byblos, Isis,<sup>o</sup>

Nephthys<sup>o</sup>

[...]

The first attestation comes just before a lacuna, probably at the beginning of a passage of direct speech: someone is addressing the Lady of Byblos, asking her to come quickly. Leitz (1999, 21) restores 3<sup>st</sup> “Isis!” in the lacuna, translating “I said to the lady of Byblos: Isis! Come ...” while adding in a note that the Lady of Byblos is probably Hathor. Although the name of Isis fits the lacuna (Leitz 1999, pl. 8, 13) and would be significant here because it would be the earliest attestation of her being associated with the Lady of Byblos, I consider the restoration unlikely. While from around the seventh century BCE the Lady of Byblos is attested as identified with Isis (see Hollis 2009, 4), nothing in this text points towards such an association. Moreover, the lacuna could also accommodate the name of Hathor, of which there is a fragmentary example in VIII, 13. Hathor would be a more obvious choice, as the “Lady of Byblos” had been associated with her since the Old Kingdom (Hollis 2009, 1) and is identified with her in a possibly roughly contemporary statue (§5.6.3). Restorations other than a goddess’ name are also possible, such as a particle or another imperative introducing the direct speech.

The second passage, in which the name of the goddess appears among other goddesses in a fragment between two lacunae, suggests that the Lady of Byblos was invoked to help Isis while being distinguished from her. Overall, the information yielded by these passages is rather meagre, although they do attest to the potency of the goddess of Byblos in magical rituals of the end of the New Kingdom.

### 5.3 *Statue Turin 3036*

Turin no. 3036 (fig. 5.8) is a statue of a man holding a Hathor-headed staff, probably a sistrum.<sup>116</sup>



FIGURE 5.8 Statue Turin 3036

FROM SCANDONE MATTHIAE 1987, PL. XXVI

<sup>116</sup> Findspot: unknown, possibly Deir El-Medina (Scandone Matthiae 1987, 122). Current location: Museo Egizio di Torino – 3036. Material: white limestone (Scandone Matthiae 1987, 115). Dimensions: 27 × 8 × 6.8 cm. Publication and general bibliography: Scandone Matthiae 1987. General description: generally well preserved, the feet and the basis are missing (Scandone Matthiae 1987).



The statue's precise provenance is unknown. Scandone Matthiae (1987, 118) dates it to the Nineteenth Dynasty, possibly to the reign of Ramses II, on stylistic grounds, suggesting that it could come from Deir El-Medina. The fragmentary inscription on the staff of the sistrum reads: *ḥwt-ḥr nbt-ḥtp(t) nbt kp(n) ḥnwt w3w[3t ...*, “Hathor, Lady of Hetepet,<sup>117</sup> Lady of Byblos, Mistress of Waw[at ...” This inscription attests that the Lady of Byblos was still identified with Hathor in the Nineteenth Dynasty. Scandone Matthiae (1987, 122–23) observes that Ramses II sponsored the construction of a temple dedicated to Hathor in Deir El-Medina, and this statue could belong to someone connected with it.

As far as I know, the spelling of *kpn* with the sign of the hand instead of the *k3p* sign<sup>118</sup> is otherwise unattested in the New Kingdom. The usage is phonetically understandable since this sign is attested in the Nineteenth Dynasty (*KRI* IV 8:15) as determinative of *k3-pw*, a Semitic loanword meaning “palm of the hand” (from Semitic *k-p*, same: Hoch 1994, 317–18). In addition, this very spelling of the name of Byblos is also attested in later sources, for example in the Twenty-second Dynasty topographical list of Sheshonq I (Epigraphic Survey 1954, pl. 4). Hoch (1994, 318) suggests it could be due to popular etymology.

#### 5.4 Hittite Sources – KBo xxvi 94.9

Byblos is mentioned in only one Hittite source, *KBo* xxvi 94:9, a tablet fragment found in Hattusha. The small fragment preserves sixteen disjointed and incomplete lines of apparently mythological nature (Polvani 1992, 452–53; Groddeck 2000–2001).

Of particular interest is line 9, where “cloths from Byblos” are mentioned:

|                                                                     |                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| ] <i>a-ra-an na-at-kan<sub>2</sub> URU ku-up-la-aš</i><br>GADA-it [ | ] stand(?) and they(?) cloth(s) from<br>Byblos [a |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|

- a. For a suggested reconstruction of the lacuna, see Groddeck 2000–2001, 24–29. The rest of the text, however, is not relevant here.

Groddeck observes that the same phrase, or a very similar one, also appears in the related fragment *KBo* xxvi 83:9. The fragmentary nature of these passages limits the interpretation. Byblos is not the central topic, being mentioned

<sup>117</sup> Here likely the name of a city in Egypt, although the primary meaning was probably “vulva”. See Vandier 1964, 56, 61–65, who also briefly mentions the statue discussed here (see pp. 82–83, viii and pl. 4). On this form of Hathor see also Vandier 1965; Vandier 1966; Vandier 1968.

<sup>118</sup> So at least seems to me on the basis of the pictures published by Scandone Matthiae.

only as the place of origin of some textiles. These passages confirm, however, that textiles from Byblos were significant enough to the Hittites to appear in a mythological context, and by inference that at some point, there had been commercial relations between the two polities.

The lack of references to Byblos in other Hittite texts contrasts with the widespread presence of Byblos in Egyptian sources. Moreover, whereas northern kingdoms like Amurru and Ugarit are well attested in Hittite sources,<sup>119</sup> the other cities of the southern Lebanese coast are also extremely rare. Only Tyre and Sidon are found, just once, in a Middle Hittite ritual text mentioning various Syro-Lebanese cities in relation to some “Cedar-gods” (*KUB* XV, p. 4). Byblos does not occur in this text: might this suggest that at the time Byblos was not a prominent partner for the Hittites in the timber commerce? In fact, in contrast with the Egyptians, for which Lebanon was the nearest source of conifer wood, the Hittites had access to a larger number of forests in a number of places, including Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus and even Anatolia itself. Byblos and Lebanon in general, therefore, were not their only possible source of wood, nor the closest ones.

In general, the Hittite sources contain little relating to the part of the coast that was within the Egyptian sphere of influence. It is difficult to say whether this reflects a lack of Hittite interest, if it points to different forms of contact and interactions that did not leave traces in the archives of Hattusha, or if it is the consequence of other factors, such as mere accidents of preservation. In any case, this lack strongly underscores the exceptional nature of the Egyptian sources and of their interest in Byblos.

### 5.5 *Ugaritic Sources*

The texts from Ugarit are one of the main sources for studying the Near East during the Late Bronze Age, offering in particular crucial information on aspects of culture and society during the thirteenth century BCE. The texts are mainly written in Akkadian and in Ugaritic, a Northwest Semitic language spoken in the city. Those in Ugaritic are written either in syllabic cuneiform or in a cuneiform alphabet. The city emerging from the texts and from the archaeological evidence was a culturally Canaanite city located at the margin of the Hittite sphere of influence. It was integrated in a well-developed trading network that extended as far as Egypt and the Aegean region and that linked it to various coastal cities, including Byblos.

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<sup>119</sup> See Del Monte and Tischler 1978, i, 14–15; ii, 5; i 451; ii 177.

## 5.5.1 Ugaritic Sources – Texts

Byblos, called <sup>URU</sup>*gub/gu-ub-la/li* in Akkadian and *gbl* in Ugaritic, is mentioned in three texts found in Ugarit. The first two (RS 19.28 and RS 18.25) are records of commercial interactions between the two cities, while the third (RS 34.145) is a letter of the king of Karkemish to the queen of Ugarit discussing various issues, including the possibility for ships from Ugarit to sail to Byblos and other coastal cities.

Five further texts contain possible attestations of Byblos. One (RS 19.182) seems to mention a person from Byblos, while a fragment of another (RS 18.134) may preserve the beginning of a letter sent by a king of Byblos to a king of Ugarit. The mentions of Byblos in the remaining three texts (RS 19.45, RS 18.5, RS 24.642D) are doubtful and not very informative. It is possible that the toponym *g-b-l* occurring in two of them does not refer to Byblos but to a consonantly homophonous place in the hinterland of Ugarit. The last tablet is too fragmentary for any conclusions to be drawn.

All these texts were found in the archives of the Royal Palace except for RS 24.642D, which is from the so-called House of the Hurrian Priest on the southern slope of the acropolis (Soldt 2000, 235).

## RS 19.28

= *PRU* 6.126

Findspot: Royal Palace

## Obverse

<sup>1</sup> 7 TUG<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ GIŠ.MA<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ  
*ma-aš<sub>2</sub>-ḥa-tu-ma*

<sup>2</sup> 1 TUG<sub>2</sub> *a-ga-su-nu*

<sup>3</sup> 2 TUG<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ *mu-ru-u<sub>2</sub>-ma*.MEŠ

<sup>4</sup> 2 TUG<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ *ma-za-<sup>r</sup>ru<sup>1</sup>-ma*.MEŠ

<sup>5</sup> 6 TUG<sub>2</sub> LA.MEŠ *lu-ḥu-ma(?)*<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup> 2 TUG<sub>2</sub> *u<sub>2</sub>-ra-tu*

<sup>7</sup> 2 TUG<sub>2</sub> GAL.MEŠ

<sup>8</sup> 3 TUG<sub>2</sub>.<sup>r</sup>MEŠ<sup>1</sup> *ma-ar-tu(?)*<sup>c</sup>

<sup>9</sup> ŠU <sup>1</sup>*a-bi-ḥi-li*

<sup>10</sup> *a-<sup>r</sup>na<sup>1</sup>* <sup>URU</sup>*gu-ub-li*

<sup>11</sup> ŠU.NIGIN<sub>2</sub> 2<sup>r</sup>5(?)<sup>1</sup> TUG<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ ŠU

<sup>1</sup>*a-bi-ḥi<sup>1</sup>-li*

7 *mašḥaṭu* textiles of the ships<sup>a</sup>

1 *agasunu* textile

2 *murūma* textiles

2 *mazaruma*<sup>b</sup> textiles

6 luxurious *lu-ḥu-ma* textiles

2 *ūrātu* textiles

2 GAL textiles<sup>d</sup>

2 *martu*<sup>e</sup> textiles

(in) the hands of Abihilu

for (the city of) Byblos

total: 2[5(?)] textiles (in) the hands of Abihilu

- a. Perhaps a kind of sail or cover? Nougayrol (1970, 159) took *mašḥaṭu* as meaning “removable” and suggested “removable ship cover.”
- b. Possibly related to *mazāru*, “to treat wool in a certain way” (CAD 10/1, 432). Nougayrol (1970, 159) suggested “felt.”
- c. So Nougayrol 1970, 100.
- d. Perhaps “textiles of greatness?”
- e. Possibly connected with *mardatu*, “fabric woven with several colours in a special technique” (CAD 10/1, 277).

This text, which is written in Akkadian, is a list of textiles given to Abihilu, destined for Byblos. Abihilu was probably the official merchant (*tamkaru*) in charge of the trade with Byblos (Heltzer 1978, 12), and the tablet looks like a receipt or a memorandum confirming the transaction. The precise nature of these textiles is not known, but among them were some “luxurious” items (line 5), perhaps some wool textiles (line 4) and some textiles that were dyed (line 8), conceivably with purple, which was used in Ugarit and for which the Phoenicians later became famous (Schaeffer 1951; Stieglitz 1994). The mention of “textiles of the ships” (line 1), referring possibly to sails or similar, is also interesting, inasmuch as the tablet treated next also records a transaction between the king of Ugarit and the king of Byblos involving ships.

### RS 18.25 (lines 10–18)

= PRU 5.106 = UT 2106 = KTU 4.338

Findspot: Royal Palace

Only obverse lines 10–18 are studied here because the rest of the text deals with an unrelated subject.

<sup>10</sup> *ḥmš . māt . ārb'm*

<sup>11</sup> *kbd . ksp . ānyt*

<sup>12</sup> *d . ṛb . b . ānyt*

<sup>13</sup> *l . mlk . gbl*

<sup>14</sup> *w . ḥmšm . ksp*

<sup>15</sup> *lqh . mlk . gbl*

<sup>16</sup> *lbš . ānyth*

<sup>17</sup> *b'rm . ksp*

<sup>18</sup> *mḥr . hn*

Five hundred and forty (shekels)  
of ship-money  
which were provided as a guarantee for ships  
to the king of Byblos;  
and fifty (shekels) of silver  
(that) the king of Byblos has  
received  
(for) the outfitting of his ships  
in *ṛm*.<sup>a</sup> (This amount of) silver  
is their value.

The translation adopted here is based on Pardee (1975).

a. Unknown locality, perhaps in the territory of Ugarit (Pardee 1975, 616–17).

This text is a memorandum referring to a commercial transaction with the king of Byblos. The nature of this transaction is not clear. Ziskind (1974) saw in it a form of loan to finance a shipping venture, but Pardee (1975, 618–19) convincingly rejected this interpretation on linguistic grounds and very tentatively suggested that this text could refer to the lease of Byblian ships to the king of Ugarit. Whatever kind of transaction is meant, this text confirms that economic relations between Ugarit and Byblos included exchanges or collaborations involving ships.

### RS 34.145

= *RSOu* 7, 9

Findspot: secondary deposit, southern part of the tell

Only obverse/lower edge lines 9–14 are studied here because the rest of the text deals with completely different matters.

Obverse (9–13) – Lower edge (14)

|                                                                                              |                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <sup>9</sup> <i>aš-šum GIŠ.MA<sub>2</sub>.MEŠ ša taš<sub>3</sub>-pu-ri</i>                   | As for the ships you wrote about, |
| <sup>10</sup> <i>i-na<sup>KUR</sup> gu<sub>5</sub>-ub-li</i>                                 | let them go to Byblos             |
| <sup>11</sup> <i>i-na<sup>KUR</sup> ši-du-ni</i>                                             | and to Sidon                      |
| <sup>12</sup> <i>lil-li-ka u<sub>3</sub> i-na gi-ri</i>                                      | but they should not go            |
| <sup>13</sup> <i>ru-u<sub>2</sub>-qi lu-u<sub>2</sub></i> <sup>14</sup> <i>la-a il-la-ka</i> | on a long(er) trip                |

RS 34.145 is a letter written in Akkadian and sent by the Hittite viceroy of Karkemish to an unidentified queen of Ugarit. The message tackles various administrative matters, such as compensation for a homicide (lines 5–8) and an issue concerning some stone seals (lines 15–18), and it has often been quoted in discussions of the political role and power of queens in Ugaritic society (Vita 1999, 470; Thomas 2013, 77). In the passage discussed here, the Hittite overlord agrees to allow some ships to sail south to Byblos and Sidon, but forbids them from travelling any further. The meaning of these limitations is not clear. A Hittite-organised blockade<sup>120</sup> against Egyptian territories can hardly

<sup>120</sup> Various blockades are attested in the Near Eastern sources of the Late Bronze Age. See for instance *EA* 101 where a local king, probably Rib-Hadda, asks the Pharaoh: “Let the



be implied, both because only the ships the queen wrote about are involved and because Lebanese cities like Byblos and Sidon, which were indeed in the Egyptian sphere of influence, are not affected. It seems more likely that the measure was dictated by some other consideration. Nevertheless, it is evident from this letter that the Hittites were well informed about Ugarit's commercial interactions and at least in some cases intervened to influence them.

### RS 19.182

= *PRU* 6.81

Findspot: Royal Palace

#### Obverse

|                                                                                |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| x+1 [...]                                                                      | [...]                                          |
| x+2]-š <sup>u</sup> <sub>URU</sub> gu <sup>1</sup> -[ub-la-a]                  | ]-š <sup>u</sup> [from (the city of)] B[yblos] |
| x+3]-nu <sub>URU</sub> gu- <sup>r</sup> ub <sup>1</sup> -[la-a]                | ]-nu [from (the city of)] B[yblos]             |
| x+4]-ia-u <sub>2</sub> <sup>URU</sup> ši- <sup>r</sup> du <sup>1</sup> -[na-a] | ]-yau [from (the city of)] Sid[on]             |
| x+5]-ra-a <sub>URU</sub> gu- <sup>r</sup> ub <sup>1</sup> -[la-a]              | [from (the city of)] By[blos]                  |
| x+6]-la-ya <sub>URU</sub> a- <sup>r</sup> ki <sup>1</sup> -[ya]                | ]-laya [from (the city of)] Ak[ko]             |
| x+7]-ya- <sup>r</sup> u <sup>1</sup> <sup>r</sup> URU <sup>1</sup> [           | ]-ya'u(?) [from (the city of) ?]               |
| x+8]-nu [                                                                      | ]-nu [                                         |
| x+9 [...]                                                                      | [...]                                          |

#### Reverse

|                                           |       |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|
| x+1 [...]                                 | [...] |
| x+2] <sup>r</sup> na <sup>1</sup> am ta [ | [...] |
| x+3] <sup>r</sup> hu <sup>1</sup> ra ni [ | [...] |
| x+4 [...]                                 | [...] |

The structure of the text, as well as its parallels with similar lists found in Ugarit (including RS 18.5 discussed below), suggest that this is a list recording the names of a group of people followed by their cities of origin (Nougayrol 1970, 79). None of the city names is complete, but the traces correspond well with

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king tell the three cities and the ships of the army not to go to the land of Amurru. If a servant seizes a boat, let him give it to you. Be informed of the affairs of your loyal servant" (Moran 1992, 174). See also Zaccagnini 2002, 144, for a comparable example from Assyria.

Byblos, Sidon, and Akko, three coastal cities well attested in the texts found at Ugarit (Vidal 2006). The determinative URU and the probable association with Sidon and Akko support the assumption that the URU*gu-ʿub*ʿ-[and URUʿ*gu*ʿ-[of this tablet is Byblos, which will then appear at least three times, in lines 2, 3, and 5, recording three people from the city who had some contact with Ugarit or were perhaps living there. Their occupations are unknown and the text is too fragmentary for further interpretation. Such lists probably recorded people dealing with or working for the royal administration of the city.

### RS 18.134

= PRU 5.159 = UT 2159 = KTU 2.44

Findspot: Royal Palace

#### Obverse

|                                             |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> <i>l . mlk[. ũ]grt</i>         | To the King of [U]garit                              |
| <sup>2</sup> <i>ihy . rgm</i>               | my brother, say:                                     |
| <sup>3</sup> <i>[th]m . m[lk . g]bl[m?]</i> | Message of the Ki[ng of (the people<br>of ?) By]blos |
| <sup>4</sup> <i>yšlm . l[k] . ilm</i>       | May you be well, may the gods                        |
| <sup>5</sup> <i>tgr . tšl[m]k</i>           | protect you (and) keep you healthy                   |
| <sup>6</sup> <i>]špš</i>                    | ] sun                                                |
| <sup>7</sup> [...]                          | [...]                                                |
| <sup>8</sup> <i>]bt(?) . gb[l(?)</i>        | [ ]house(?) of Byb[los (?)]                          |
| <sup>9</sup> <i>]k[...]. w . špš</i>        | [ ] and the Sun                                      |
| <sup>10</sup> <i>[b] . šp[n?]</i>           | [on] (Mount) Zaph[on ?]                              |
| <sup>11</sup> <i>[ ]š[ ]</i>                | [...]                                                |
| <sup>12</sup> [...]                         | [...]                                                |
| <sup>13</sup> [...]                         | [...]                                                |
| <sup>14</sup> <i>]tty</i>                   | [...]                                                |
| <sup>15</sup> <i>]rd(?)y</i>                | [...]                                                |
| <sup>16</sup> <i>]bʿl</i>                   | ] Baʿal (?)                                          |
| <sup>17</sup> <i>] . plz</i>                | [...]                                                |
| <sup>18</sup> <i>]ttk</i>                   | [...]                                                |
| <sup>19</sup> <i>]mlk</i>                   | ]king (?)                                            |
| <sup>20</sup> [...]                         | [...]                                                |

RS 18.134 is a letter addressed to the king of Ugarit. The details of the sender are partially lost, but it could be the king of Byblos. Since the text is in Ugaritic,

the tablet is possibly a translation made for the archives.<sup>121</sup> Only the introduction and the usual salutation formulae (Hawley 2008, 206) are preserved. The expression *lhy*, “my brother,” usually indicates that the two kings considered themselves to be peers (Pardee 1997–2003, III 93 n. 39; Liverani 2002, 18; Vidal 2005, 292–94; Hawley 2008, 213–18). The mention of the receiver before the sender is probably a matter of diplomatic politeness and does not necessarily imply subordination, and in any case the introductory formula could have been modified by the Ugaritic scribe/translator in accordance with a Ugaritic perspective.

The content of the letter is largely lost. The possible mention of the god Ba‘al (line 16),<sup>122</sup> of Mount Zaphon (line 10) where Ba‘al dwelled (Wyatt 1999, 544–45), and of the sun or sun god (line 6), could suggest that the letter discussed a religious matter, rather than a commercial transaction. This would not be exceptional: although the cities of the coast had commercial relations with Ugarit (Arnaud 1992; Vidal 2006), the letters sent by their kings to the king or the *sakinu* of Ugarit usually dealt with non-commercial issues. In particular, of the fourteen letters from Lebanese cities found in Ugarit,<sup>123</sup> only two mention, marginally, an economic transaction.<sup>124</sup> All the others concern diplomatic or non-commercial matters, such as enquiries about the arrival of messengers, a complaint about excessive taxes in Ugarit, a communication about a Ugaritic shipwreck in Tyre, or an attempt to settle a dispute related to a religious offence committed in Sidon by people from Ugarit (RS 86.2208, RS 86.2221+, RS 86.2234, and perhaps also RS 18.054A; see Singer 1999, 670 with references). It is hard to say whether this range is representative of the overall content of the letters exchanged between kings. If so, commercial matters were perhaps dealt with by agents other than the kings, such as merchants or different members of the administration, or orally or in other forms involving different media.

121 On the likelihood that some texts found in Ugarit are translations, see Pitard 1999, 51, n. 8; van Soldt 1999, 30, n. 12. In general, if the letter was in Akkadian, it is unlikely that it would have been translated as Akkadian was well known in Ugarit. If instead it was in another language or on another support (e.g. on papyrus, or on a waxed tablet), it might have made sense to translate it into Ugaritic (Liverani 1979b, 1328; Watson 1999, 124; Vidal 2006, 271). Pardee (1997, III 93 n. 37) does not dismiss the possibility that these texts are translations but observes that no Akkadian original has been found and wonders if these Ugaritic letters could be transcriptions of messages delivered orally or could have been written in Ugaritic by scribes from Ugarit residing at the foreign court.

122 Although *bʿl* in Ugaritic could also mean simply “lord.”

123 From Beirut RS 11.730, RS 34.137, RS 86.2212; from Sidon: RS 11.723, RS 25.430A, RS 34.149, RS 86.2208, RS 86.2221 + 86.2225 + 86.2226 + 86.2240, RS 86.2234, and perhaps RS 18.054A; from Tyre: RS [Varia 25], RS 18.031, RS 17.424C, RS 34.167.

124 RS [Varia 25] and RS 34.167, both from Tyre.

Alternatively, these letters could represent just a small part of the exchanged correspondence that was specifically selected to be kept in the archives. The motivations for such a selection may have varied, and could have included, for instance, whether long-term matters were at issue.<sup>125</sup> In both cases, if the few religiously focused references surviving in RS 18.134 are representative of its content, then this letter from Byblos would fit with the generally non-commercial nature of the attested correspondence between kings.

### RS 19.45

= PRU 5.38 = UT 2038 = KTU 4.618

Findspot: Royal Palace

### Obverse

|                                                   |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> [b.] gt. t <sub>p</sub> n. šr. šmdm  | ten yokes (of steers) in the t <sub>p</sub> n-farm  |
| <sup>2</sup> w. tlt. šr. bnš                      | and thirteen labourers                              |
| <sup>3</sup> yd. ytm. yd. r'y. ḥmrm               | with two foremen and a muleteer                     |
| -----                                             |                                                     |
| <sup>4</sup> b. gt. gwl. tmn. šmdm                | eight yokes (of steers) in the                      |
|                                                   | gwl-farm                                            |
| <sup>5</sup> w. arb <sup>c</sup> . šr. bnš        | and fourteen labourers                              |
| <sup>6</sup> yd. ngr. mdr <sup>c</sup> . yd. šbrm | with a guardian of the sown land                    |
|                                                   | with sticks                                         |
| -----                                             |                                                     |
| <sup>7</sup> [b.] gt. i <sub>p</sub> tl. tt. šmdm | six yokes (of steers) in the i <sub>p</sub> tl-farm |
| <sup>8</sup> [w.] šr. bnšm. yd. šbr[m]            | and ten labourers with stick[s]                     |
| -----                                             |                                                     |
| <sup>9</sup> b. ūlm. bd. r[b?]m. dlm              | in ūlm ??? <sup>a</sup>                             |
| <sup>10</sup> tt. šr šmd. ālpm                    | sixteen yokes of oxen                               |
| <sup>11</sup> w. tš <sup>c</sup> . šr. bnš. ḥr[š] | and nineteen craftsmen                              |
| <sup>12</sup> w [.] tlt. ḥrš. mrkbt               | and three chariot-makers                            |
| -----                                             |                                                     |
| <sup>13</sup> [b. gt. ātlg.] tlt. š[m]d. ālpm     | three yokes of oxen [in the                         |
|                                                   | ātlg-farm]                                          |
| <sup>14</sup> [w. š]r bnšm                        | and ten labourers                                   |
| -----                                             |                                                     |

<sup>125</sup> See for instance the case of the “great sin” committed by people from Ugarit in Sidon and discussed in various letters (Arnaud 1992, 185, 189–91; Singer 1999, 670).

|       |                                                     |                                              |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 15    | [ <i>b . gt . gbl . ḥ</i> ] <i>mš . šmd . ālpm</i>  | five yokes of oxen [in the <i>gbl</i> -farm] |
| 16    | [ <i>w . ? . bn</i> ] <i>šm</i>                     | [and ? lab]ourers                            |
| ----- |                                                     |                                              |
| 17    | [ <i>b . gt . zṛī</i> ] <i>š . ḥmš . šmd . ālpm</i> | five yokes of oxen [in the <i>zṛī</i> ]      |
|       |                                                     | š[-farm]                                     |
| 18    | [ <i>w . ? . bn</i> ] <i>šm</i>                     | [and ? lab]ourers                            |
| ----- |                                                     |                                              |
| 19    | [ <i>b . gt . ḡz kbd</i> ] . <i>šr . šmd . ālpm</i> | ten yokes of oxen [in the <i>ḡz</i>          |
|       |                                                     | <i>kbd</i> -farm]                            |
| 20    | [ <i>w . ? . b</i> ] <i>nšm</i>                     | [and ? l]abourers                            |
| ----- |                                                     |                                              |

## Lower edge

|       |                                               |                                             |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 21    | [ <i>b . gt . ḥr</i> ] <i>tm . ḥmš . šmdm</i> | five yokes (of steers) in the [ <i>ḥr</i> ] |
|       |                                               | <i>tm</i> -[farm]                           |
| 22    | [ <i>w . ? . bn</i> ] <i>šm</i>               | [and ? l]abourers                           |
| ----- |                                               |                                             |

## Reverse

|    |                                              |                                              |
|----|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 23 | <i>b . gt tpn . āḥd</i>                      | in the <i>tpn</i> -farm: one                 |
| 24 | [ <i>b .</i> ] <i>gt gwl . āḥd</i>           | [in] the <i>gwl</i> -farm: one               |
| 25 | [ <i>b . gt ī</i> ] <i>ptl . šr</i> [ ]      | [in the <i>ī</i> ] <i>ptl</i> -farm: ten [ ] |
| 26 | [ <i>b . gt</i> ] <i>ūlm . āḥd</i>           | [in] the <i>ūlm</i> -[farm]: one             |
| 27 | [ <i>b . gt</i> ] <i>ātlg . āḥd</i>          | [in] the <i>ātlg</i> -[farm]: one            |
| 28 | [ <i>b . g</i> ] <i>t gbl . āḥd</i>          | [in] the <i>gbl</i> -fa[rm]: one             |
| 29 | <i>b . gt zṛiš . ḥmš</i> ‘[ <i>šr</i> ]      | in the <i>zṛiš</i> -farm: fifteen            |
| 30 | <i>b . gt ḡz kbd . tmn</i>                   | in the <i>ḡz kbd</i> -farm: eight            |
| 31 | <i>b . gt trmn . ḥ</i> [ <i>m</i> ] <i>š</i> | in the <i>trmn</i> -farm: five               |
| 32 | [ <i>b .</i> ] <i>gt ḥrtm . āḥd</i>          | [in] the <i>ḥrtm</i> -farm: one              |

- a The meaning of *dlm* is not known (Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003, 271), and the uncertainty of the second consonant of *r*[*b?*]*m* makes the reading of this passage very doubtful.

RS 19.45 is an administrative document in Ugaritic, whose recto records the distribution of personnel and animals to various *gt*, literally “wine/olive presses” and by extension “farms,” “agricultural estates” (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín



2003, 311). The names of these estates are repeated on the verso, followed by some numbers; this list is probably a summary or a receipt.

The name of the sixth place in the list is lost in the first part of the tablet, but is preserved as *gt gbl* in the final list. As seen above, *gbl* is the usual Ugaritic spelling for Byblos, but the tablet's content does not easily fit with this interpretation, because this document deals with local agricultural administration with which Byblos would hardly be involved. It is thus likely that the *gbl* of this tablet refers to a place in the hinterland of Ugarit<sup>126</sup> rather than to Byblos.

### RS 18.5

= PRU 5.121 = UT 2121 = KTU 4.321

Findspot: Royal Palace

#### Obverse

|                                   |                                              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| x+1] <i>bn . ḡs . ḥrš . šgty</i>  | ] son of <i>ḡs</i> , worker, from <i>šgt</i> |
| x+2 <i>ʿdy . bn . sl'y . gbly</i> | ʿdy, son of <i>Sl'y</i> , from Byblos        |
| x+3 <i>yrm . b'l . bn . kky</i>   | <i>Yrm-b'l</i> , son of <i>Kky</i>           |

This Ugaritic tablet bears a list of people's names, professions or patronyms, and places of origin. One person is said to be *gbly*, "from *gbl*." If this *gbl* is Byblos, this is a Byblian person living in Ugarit or having a connection with the city. In contrast with RS 19.182, however, this *gbl* is not associated with other coastal cities, and the other place mentioned, *šgt*, is unknown. It is therefore impossible to know whether this *gbl* is Byblos, a *gbl* located in the countryside of Ugarit as in RS 19.45, or another homonymous or homographous place.

### RS 24.642D

= KTU 7.137

Findspot: House of the Hurrian Priest

This Ugaritic tablet is too fragmentary to be translated. A mention of Byblos may be present in the few disconnected words that survive: the consonants *g-b-l* can be read in line 5, but the root *g-b-l* can also mean "mountain" and "border" (Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003, 293), or it may refer to a place in the hinterland of Ugarit, as in RS 19.45.

<sup>126</sup> In Ugaritic *gbl* can also mean "mountain" or "boundary" (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003, 293).

### 5.5.2 Ugaritic Sources – Discussion

In contrast with the Egyptian sources, the texts from Ugarit do not deal with exceptional, royally-sponsored missions but describe regular interactions and exchanges within a regional network. Since Byblos was not the only coastal city interacting with Ugarit, assessing the amount, nature, and distribution of the attestations of other cities and kingdoms in the documents from the city can offer a more general picture of the position of Byblos within the network. These polities are attested in three ways in the archives of Ugarit: as partners in documents dealing with politico-legal matters linking them with Ugarit, as senders of letters found in Ugarit, or mentioned in documents originating within Ugarit. Not all of these cities and kingdoms are attested in all of these three ways. Rather, three distinct groups can be recognised.

The first group consists only of the kingdom of Amurru, which is attested in Ugaritic sources in all of the three ways: the name of the kingdom is mentioned in at least seventeen texts mainly originating from the Ugaritic administration;<sup>127</sup> eleven letters were sent by various people of Amurru;<sup>128</sup> and four politico-legal texts between Ugarit and Amurru<sup>129</sup> are known. The last group consists of three documents concerning the divorce of the Ugaritic King ‘Ammittamru II<sup>130</sup> from the daughter of Benteshina, king of Amurru, and an earlier treaty from the times of Niqmaddu II and Aziru.<sup>131</sup>

A second group of cities is represented by letters sent by their kings and by mentions in various documents from Ugarit itself. These are Sidon (seven letters, two uncertain letters, and four mentions<sup>132</sup>), Tyre (five letters and two mentions<sup>133</sup>), Beirut (four letters and one mention<sup>134</sup>), and Byblos (one letter and four mentions + one uncertain mention,<sup>135</sup> as seen above).

127 RS 16.146+, RS 16.270, RS 17.82, RS 17.228, RS 17.318, RS 17.372A+, RS 17.396, RS 17.450A, RS 18.6, RS 19.68, RS 20.4, RS 34.135, *KTU* 1.4, *KTU* 2.58, *KTU* 2.72, RS [Varia 9], *Semitica* 41–42.

128 RS 15.24 + 50, RS 16.111, RS 16.116, RS 17.116, RS 17.152, RS 17.286, RS 19.6, RS 20.33, RS 20.162, RS 23.23, RS [Varia 27].

129 The “tablette G. Badr” (Arnaud and Salvini 1991), RS 17.228, RS 17.318+, RS 17.360A+.

130 Ca. 1260–1235; see Singer 1999, 678–83.

131 RS 19.68, dating to the second half of the fourteenth century BCE (Singer 1991, 148). This treaty is one of the oldest agreements, perhaps the oldest, found in the palace (Márquez Rowe 1999, 409).

132 Letters: RS 11.723, RS 18.54, RS 25.430, RS 34.149, RS 86.2208, RS 86.2221+, RS 86.2234 and perhaps RS 1–11. [28], RS 18.268. Mentions: *Keret* IV 199, 201, RS 19.182, RS 34.145, RS 34.153.

133 Letters: RS [Varia 25], RS 17.424C, RS 18.31, RS 18.40, RS 34.167+175. Mentions: *Keret* IV 199, 201, RS 19.42.

134 Letters: RS 11.730, RS 34.137, RS 86.2212, CK 7. Mentions: RS 16.191+272.

135 Letter: RS 18.134. Mentions: RS 18.25, RS 19.28, RS 19.182, RS 34.145 and perhaps RS 18.5.

A third and last group is formed of cities that are only mentioned in texts from Ugarit, but for which no letter is known. They are Akko (six mentions<sup>136</sup>), Ashdod (six mentions<sup>137</sup>), Ashkelon (two mentions<sup>138</sup>), and Arwad (one mention<sup>139</sup>).

These groups are geographically coherent, and the profiles of their sources give a north-south gradient: Amurru in the north is the most richly attested, the cities of the Lebanese coast are attested only by letters and mentions, and those of the southern Levant only by scattered mentions. Only Arwad does not fit into this pattern, but this could be because at the time the city may have not been independent but a dependency of Amurru (Vidal 2008).

The different sources for these groups correspond to different kinds of interaction. Mentions are usually in texts concerning economic, commercial, or administrative matters. The letters, instead, tend to deal with diplomatic and other non-commercial issues. The treaty with Amurru and the tablets concerning the divorce attest to more political and strategic relations. Thus Amurru's interactions with Ugarit appear to have involved political (the treaty), diplomatic (the letters) and economic/administrative (the mentions) exchanges. Amurru belonged to the same Hittite sphere of influence as Ugarit and was its closest southern neighbour, thus both a potential ally and a potential threat. The cities of the Lebanese coast were probably too distant and not big enough to be politically relevant. The presence of both letters and mentions, however, suggests that they were still close enough to have commercial ties and diplomatic relations with Ugarit. The cities of the southern Levant traded and had economic interactions with Ugarit but were probably too far away for any substantive diplomatic attention.

This range of interactions characterises the relations of Ugarit with comparable regional polities but does not apply to the macro-regional powers of the Hittite Empire, Egypt, and Assyria. Hattusha and Karkemish, the Hittite suzerains of Ugarit, had important economic, diplomatic, and political ties with Ugarit in spite of their distance, no doubt because of their dominant role over the city. As for Egypt and Assyria, in contrast, it is their international significance that was relevant. Egypt was much more distant than the southern Levant, but Ugarit had diplomatic exchanges with it,<sup>140</sup> since macro-regional

<sup>136</sup> RS 10.52, RS 18.31, RS 19.42, RS 19.182, RS 34.147, RIH 78/12.

<sup>137</sup> RS 11.840, RS 18.42, RS 19.20, RS 19.96, RS 23.28, RS 1957.701.

<sup>138</sup> RS 19.42, RS 19.91.

<sup>139</sup> RS 19.42.

<sup>140</sup> Attested by two or three letters, namely RS 86.2230, RS 88.2158, and perhaps also RS 26.158.

prestige, power, and leverage outweighed distance. Assyria's situation was probably analogous.<sup>141</sup>

This situation was almost certainly not unique to Ugarit; such patterns of interaction were probably common among the cities and kingdoms of the area that have not produced archives, such as Byblos. Significantly, at the time of these documents the Ugaritic network extended beyond the Hittite sphere of influence and included not only cities that were Egyptian vassals, but also Egypt itself. It is not known when or how this network originated, but the Peace Treaty between Hattushili III and Ramses II and the ensuing period of peace will have affected it significantly (Singer 1999, 646–47, 653). It clearly appears that in this period of the later thirteenth century BCE, polities with different overlords could sustain regional and macro-regional commercial and diplomatic connections, and these opportunities must have had an important impact on the cities of the coast, including Byblos. In particular, Byblos and the other cities of the southern Lebanese coast, with their traditional connection with Egypt, could have been interesting commercial partners for northern polities such as Ugarit or Amurru, which instead were located within the Hittite sphere of influence, as this must have given them access to a different range of resources and commercial opportunities. Finally, a trace of an emerging, new geopolitical balance can perhaps also be seen in the distribution of the texts just discussed. In particular, for the cities of the Lebanese coast, the numbers of letters vary significantly, with Byblos being the least represented: only one letter mentions the city, in contrast with the seven/nine letters from Sidon, five from Tyre, and four from Beirut. This could suggest that, to Ugarit, Byblos was not as prominent as Sidon and Tyre were. It has often been suggested that Sidon may have had a dominant role in the thirteenth century BCE (Arnaud 1992, 182; Singer 1999, 670; Vidal 2005, 294), and these frequencies could support such a scenario.

## 6 The End of the Late Bronze Age

Byblos disappears again from the written records at the end of the Late Bronze Age and reappears both in Egyptian and Levantine texts only in the Iron Age. The *Tale of Wenamun* is by far the most important of these later sources. The text was composed after the Bronze Age, and I will therefore not discuss it in detail. The text, however, contains crucial information about Byblos, which can be useful also to understand its Late Bronze Age reality. The *Tale of Wenamun*

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141 Assyria is also attested by two or three letters, RS 6.198, RS 34.165, and perhaps RS 18.054A.

was long considered a reliable report of an official mission to buy wood in Byblos, but the current consensus is to see it as a fictional composition (e.g., Scheepers 1992; Baines 1999; Schipper 2005; Baines 2009). Because of its literary nature, the tale can hardly be used as a reliable historical document; nevertheless, its setting and implicit dynamics could be informative for the reality of the time (Liverani 2001, 172). For instance, the text contains references to practices and conventions that have parallels in earlier and later sources (de Spens 1998; Liverani 2001, 170–75), as well as precious information on the goods that could be exchanged in these commercial interactions and on the wood trade in general (Homsy-Gottwalles 2009, Kilani 2016a). The tale can thus be a crucial source to complement other evidence.

## 7 Other Sources

### 7.1 *Byblos in Egyptian Personal Names*

The epithet *nbt-kbn*, “Lady of Byblos,” with which the Egyptians referred to the goddess of Byblos, appears on a few Egyptian objects and is attested as a personal name since the Middle Kingdom (Ranke 1935, I, 189). New Kingdom attestations are given below.

- **1. No. Cairo 34117, Stele**
  - Publications: *PM* v, 58, Lacau 1909, 169, pl. liii
  - Date: Eighteenth Dynasty, reign of Thutmose III
  - Provenance: Abydos
  - Citation: Ranke 1935, i, 189; Horn 1963, 61
  - Orthography of the name: 
  - Notes: *Nbt-kbn* is the main character of the main register of the stele, where she is shown sitting and receiving offerings from her son and his family. Other members of the family are represented in the lower register. *Nbt-kbn* was a member of the royal court and the nurse of *S3t-Jmn*, daughter of Ahmose, and it is possible she was already deceased when the stele was dedicated (see Bryan 2006, 98–99, who vocalises the name “Nebetkabeny”). The orthography of “Byblos” in the name is unusual, and seems to be otherwise attested only on the stele of *Wsr-stt* (§5.3.1).
- **2. No. British Museum EA 365, Stele**
  - Publications: *PM* v, 96; *HTBM* 7, 13, pl. xlvi; Budge 1909, 119, pl. xlvi
  - Date: Eighteenth Dynasty, reign of Amenhotep III (see *HTBM* 7, 13 and online catalogue of the BM [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=123142&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=123142&partId=1) – accessed: 6.1.2017)



- Provenance: Abydos
- Citation: Ranke 1935, i, 189
- Orthography of the name: 
- Notes: The stele belonged to the *w'w n t3 hntyt*, “sailor of (Pharaoh’s) crews,” Apeni. In the third register, on the right, two couples are represented in front of an offering-table – they are probably relatives of Apeni. *Nbt-kbn* is one of these women. The  sign in her name is abbreviated to a simple line, but Ranke’s (1935, i, 189) identification looks correct.
- **3. Turin Cat. 40, Ushabti/statuette**
  - Publications: Fabretti et al. 1882, 8 (without photograph)
  - Date: New Kingdom (according to Ranke 1935, i, 189)
  - Provenance: not known
  - Citation: Ranke 1935, i, 189
  - Orthography of the name: not known
  - Notes: The Turin catalogue describes no. 40 as a small (4 cm high) bronze statuette of Osiris. Ranke (1935, i, 189) cited it with a question mark. He described it as an ushabti and dated it to the New Kingdom without explanation. Bronze is not the normal material for ushabtis (although some are indeed known, see Clayton 1972), so it may be a bronze votive, unless Ranke’s number is wrong. No image is available to me and I have been unable to determine the orthography of the name.
- **4. Turin Cat. 30, Statue?**
  - Publications: Fabretti et al. 1882, 5 (without photograph)
  - Date: New Kingdom (according to Horn 1963, 61)
  - Provenance: not known
  - Citation: Horn 1963, 61
  - Orthography of name:  (Horn 1963, 61)
  - Notes: The entry in the Turin catalogue describes this object as a small (0.48 m) stone statue of Osiris. The god is described as standing with an “obelisk” (probably an obelisk-shaped back-pillar) against his back bearing a hieroglyphic inscription. On the front of the base there is a “lute” (i.e., the *nfr*-sign  F35 or the *sm3*-sign  F36?) between two probable udjat-eyes (“sul davanti del piedistallo il liuto in mezzo ai due occhi mistici”). No image is available. The orthography of *Nbt-kpn* recorded by Horn (1963, 61) looks suspiciously similar to that of statue Turin 3036 discussed above (§5.6.3), especially if Horn’s *k3p* sign is a misreading of the hand sign. The two could be the same, and if so the catalogue number given by Horn is wrong (30 instead of 3036). This could explain why in the catalogue description of statue no. 30 there is no mention of an inscription to the Lady of Byblos: it is the wrong statue. Likewise, if Horn’s catalogue

number is wrong for this entry, the number of another object in Turin that he recorded (no. 5 below) could also be wrong.

– 5. **Statue? Stele?**

- Horn (1963, 61) mentioned another stele bearing the name *nbt-kbn* dating to the New Kingdom. According to him, it is Turin Nr. 166. However, this entry corresponds to a wooden statue in the catalogue of Fabretti et al. 1882. No image is available in Horn or in the catalogue so the information cannot be verified. It could be a mistake for the ushabti no. 40 mentioned by Ranke (Ranke 1935, i, 189), which is not in Horn's list.

Of these objects, nos. 1 and 2 date to the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep III respectively, while nos. 3, 4, and 5 (doubtful) cannot be precisely dated. The attestations from the reign of Thutmose III are in keeping with the preeminence that the city enjoyed during his reign (see also §5.2.5.2). Overall, however, these names are not very informative. They confirm that the goddess of Byblos was known and worshipped, or at least respected, in Egypt during the New Kingdom and in particular during the Eighteenth Dynasty, but nothing more. These names cannot be used as evidence for the origin of these women or their families, because there could be different reasons for their having been chosen: were they people from Byblos like the woman mentioned in the stele of *Wsr-stt* (§5.3.1), whose names honoured the goddess of their home city? Or were they Egyptian women who bore these names because their families were somehow connected to the city (for instance through participation in campaigns or expeditions?) or because some form of worship of the goddess was practised in Egypt itself (as suggested by Pap. BM EA 9997 + 10309, §5.6.2)?

None of these questions can be answered, but they should be asked, as they show that interactions between Egypt and Byblos were not only a matter of international politics, kings, and gods, but they also had effects on the everyday lives of ordinary people.

## Byblos in the Late Bronze Age – Biography of a City

### 1 Introduction

The information provided by the primary sources are further discussed in this chapter, in order to present a coherent picture of Late Bronze Age Byblos, of its interactions, and of its historical evolution.

The first aspects examined here are the geographical and geopolitical layout of the kingdom, its socio-economic landscape, and the evolution of its relationship with Egypt, which was defined and shaped by economic, geopolitical, and ideological considerations. The ideological factor, in particular, played a central and peculiar role, and it is therefore discussed in detail in §6.5. Finally, the general development of the city is presented in §6.6.

### 2 Geographical and Geopolitical Layout

The kingdom of Byblos was located on the coast just north of Beirut. The city of Byblos was its capital and it directly controlled various towns and villages within its territory, while other regional political entities were in a relation of alliance, or even vassalage, with it (see §5.4.5).

In the east and in the west, the kingdom was delimited by the natural frontiers formed by the chain of Mount Lebanon and by the Mediterranean Sea. By contrast, political borders defined its southern and northern extension. Southwards the kingdom of Byblos adjoined that of Beirut. No source gives any information about the exact location of this frontier, but it is likely that it corresponded to a natural feature such as a river or a valley. The Nahr El-Kalb, in particular, is a good candidate: its valley is located between the two cities (being ca. 16 km north of Beirut, and ca. 28 km south of Byblos), and its mouth is characterised by a cliff forming a natural bottleneck on the main road along the coast. Moreover, the choice of the Nahr El-Kalb by Ramses II to engrave his steles suggests that the place had some sort of symbolic, possibly liminal, connotation (§4.9). Since no conflict or other political event that could have caused a modification of this border is attested in the sources, it may have remained stable throughout the Late Bronze Age.

The situation on the northern border, instead, was more complex, and the location of the frontier there changed more than once during the Late Bronze

Age. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty the frontier was probably somewhere between Byblos and Ullassa, which was then an independent city (§5.2.5.1). Ullassa, however, was captured and subdued by the Egyptians between years 29 and 31 of Thutmose III, and it is possible that Byblos extended its territory and political influence northwards in the wake of this event (see §5.2.5.1 and §5.4.5). The resulting geopolitical layout lasted until the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, when the kingdom of Byblos suffered important territorial losses caused by the emergence of Amurru and by the following wars with 'Abdi-Ashirta and Aziru (§5.4.6). At the end of the Amarna period the northern frontier was probably located very close to Byblos itself, somewhere south of Batruna 5.4.6). The sources are silent about the evolution of the northern border after the Amarna period, but it is unlikely that the situation changed again significantly.

Various factors could affect the geographical and geopolitical situation of Byblos, either positively or negatively. Competition and wars with other local political entities, modifications in alliances, and shifts in the balance of power could be occasions for political and territorial expansion or could cause territorial and political losses. The status of Byblos could also be affected by the macro-regional geopolitical situation. The city was often the northernmost territory under the control of the Egyptians, for whom it was then strategically important. The long tradition of friendly relations with Egypt made Byblos a precious potential ally, while its position made it a good starting point for military expeditions in the north, especially at the beginning of the New Kingdom when the Egyptian grip on the region was far from consolidated. Moreover, the city could easily be reached by sea, and its shipbuilders could be put at the service of the Egyptian army, as Thutmose III did in his eighth campaign (§5.2.1). Byblos itself could benefit from the presence of Egyptian soldiers in the area. The city's rulers may have exploited the on-going Egyptian military activities to expand their own territory and sphere of influence. It is likely that in the reign of Thutmose III an Egyptian garrison was installed near Byblos, possibly in Ullassa, which at the time may have been administratively connected with the kingdom of Byblos (see §5.2.5.1). Its presence could have reinforced the prestige, authority, and political weight of Byblos in the region.

It is clear, however, that the strategic value of Byblos was not a constant factor, but depended on the wider geopolitical situation in general, and on the Egyptian political and military ambitions in particular. When these ambitions were oriented towards Syria and the Levantine coast, Byblos could benefit from them, but when the Egyptian attention moved elsewhere or declined, their potentially positive influence faded away (see further §6.6.1–6.6.6).

### 3 Economy and Economic Landscape

Economic factors were vital in the interactions and evolution of Byblos. The kingdom's territory supplied various natural resources, and the city was a hub for many artisanal activities. Moreover, Byblos was part of a regional and international trading network. The scattered and uneven nature of the information, however, limits the scope of the analysis of these economic realities. Moreover, no archive has been found in the city, unlike in Ugarit and in Alalakh (see e.g., Nougayrol 1970; Soldt 2000; Dassow 2005), so that many aspects of the everyday economy of Byblos remain inaccessible. Nevertheless, some relevant features of its economic system can still be inferred from the evidence.

#### 3.1 *Natural Resources*

The most famous natural resource of Byblos was timber. In contrast with today's barren landscape, during the Late Bronze Age the inland and the slopes of Mount Lebanon were covered with dense forests (Mikesell 1969). Differences in altitude, latitude, and exposure favoured the growth of various plants. To mention only the best-known trees of the region, oaks (*Quercus calliprinos*) and pines (*Pinus brutia*, *Pinus halepensis*) were typical below 1000 m. The famous cedars (*Cedrus libani*) grew between an altitude of 1000 m and 2000 m, while forests of juniper (*Juniper excelsa*) were common above 2000 m. The Cilician fir (*Abies cilicica*) could also be found between 1000 m and 2000 m, but only north of Byblos, more precisely north of the Kadisha Valley and of Horsh Ehden inland from modern Tripoli (Mikesell 1969; Awad et al. 2014, *passim*, fig. 1; Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 2016). Wood was both used locally and exported. Thalmann (2006, esp. 865–71) has convincingly suggested that the buildings of Byblos were made of wood or of mudbricks set within wooden frames and erected on stone foundations. Wood was also used for shipbuilding (see §6.3.0.2). It was exported, both as raw logs and as semi-finished items; an example is the *Tale of Wenamun*, where specific ship parts are sent to Egypt by the Byblian king of Byblos (Wen. 2:38, Schipper 2005, 80). Resins, oils, and essences obtained from various trees were also known, exploited, and exported (Asensi Amorós and Vozenin-Serra 1998; Serpico and White 1998).

Animal husbandry was practiced in the kingdom. Oxen were used for heavy works such as logging, as attested by the Gebel Barkal stele (§5.2.1) and the *Tale of Wenamun* (Wen. 2:43; Schipper 2005, 82; §5.7), while in Amarna letter EA 113:14–15 the king of Byblos Rib-Hadda claimed that his “[cattle] ‘and’ small cattle”<sup>1</sup> had been plundered by Yapah-Hadda. The meat from sheep was

1 [GU<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ] ‘u3’ UZ<sub>3</sub>.MEŠ: see Rainey and Schniedewind 2015, 602.



consumed,<sup>2</sup> while wool was central in the economy of coastal cities like Ugarit (Matoïan and Vita 2014; Breniquet and Michel 2014), and that was probably the case at Byblos as well. The wool was woven (§3.4) and used locally or exported (§5.6.4). We have no evidence to determine how cattle were managed in Byblos. In Ugarit, it seems that families owned only small herds, composed in average of a few tens of animals, while the palace owned herds of thousands of animals. The general picture is that of a modest peasant society that probably complemented its economy with the products of farming and other activities, in contrast to a central administration managing the majority of the animal resources, either directly or through a system of taxes, such as the *maqqudu* grazing tax that could be paid in “sheep” (Matoïan and Vita 2014, 315–16). The situation in Byblos may have been similar, although there is no evidence to prove it. Moreover, the texts from Ugarit show that husbandry was probably not uniformly distributed over the territory of the kingdom. Rather, some regions (namely the north and north-east) seem to have been geographically and environmentally more suited than others for breeding livestock (Matoïan and Vita 2014, 316). In Byblos, however, the geographical and environmental conditions could have been different, either favouring or hampering husbandry. Since we have no administrative text describing the agro-pastoral resources of the kingdom nor animal remains from the city, it is impossible now to assess the suitability of the territory of the kingdom for such activities. Modern environmental data are not helpful either, as Lebanon went through an intense process of deforestation in the recent past (Mikesell 1969), and land that today is available for grazing could have been covered with forests, and therefore could have been inaccessible in the past. In fact, considering the importance of wood in the city’s economy, the rulers of Byblos may have favoured forests over grazing land.

Agriculture was another primary resource for the city, but the only references to it are in the Amarna letters. Peasantry is mentioned in various letters from Byblos,<sup>3</sup> while in others Rib-Hadda claims to be forced to buy grain from Yarimuta, as there is not enough food in Byblos (§5.4.4, §5.4.6). This suggests that, at least during the war with Amurru, local agricultural production might not have been enough to sustain the city. Rib-Hadda claims twice that

2 As it is implicitly suggested by the *Tale of Wenamun* (Wen. 2:69 – Schipper 2005, 94) and attested by the archaeological evidence from Ugarit, where zooarchaeological analyses of the bones found on the site have revealed patterns suggesting that some of the small herd animals of the city were raised for meat consumption (Matoïan and Vita 2014, 311). Such analyses are impossible for Byblos, where animal bones were not collected during the excavations, but there is no reason to doubt the situation in the two cities was similar.

3 LÚ.MEŠ [lu]-up-ši et similia – see EA 77:36–37, EA 81:33, EA 114:21–22, EA 117:90, EA 118:23,37, EA 125:27,34–35, EA 130:42.

his crops have been plundered for two (*EA* 85:9–11) and three (*EA* 86:38–39) years and this is why he and his people needed to buy grain from Yarimuta. Both these letters were written after the fall of Shigata and Ampî (implicitly announced in *EA* 78) but before the announcement of the capture of Batruna recorded in *EA* 87 5.4.55.4.6 (§6.4.5, §6.4.6). Batruna is still said to belong to Rib-Hadda in *EA* 81, which suggests two possible scenarios. The first is that the capture of Batruna is announced by Rib-Hadda in *EA* 87, but the city fell earlier, possibly as early as *EA* 82 (with *EA* 81 being the last letter in which Batruna still belongs to Rib-Hadda). Rib-Hadda, however, seems to be quite eager to communicate the enemy advances to the Pharaoh, and there is no real reason to expect him to delay in mentioning such an event. Therefore, a second scenario, in which the fall of Batruna occurred just before *EA* 87, is more likely, which would then mean that the plundered crops mentioned in *EA* 85 and *EA* 86 could have been grown around and possibly north of Batruna, where the battlefield was at the time. This would imply that Rib-Hadda relied on the agricultural production of territories in that area and possibly farther north towards Shigata, that is, relatively far from Byblos itself. The land of the northern Lebanese coast is in fact more suited for agriculture than that around the city of Byblos, as the mountains are farther from the coast and there are larger plains that anticipate the Akkar plain around Sumur. It is thus plausible that these territories were the “granary” of the kingdom, and this could have been a factor in Byblos’s evident political interest in the north. If so, the capture by Amurru of these agricultural lands must have resulted in a serious economic loss for Byblos (see already §5.4.6).

Besides war, natural events could also have affected agriculture in the kingdom, although there is no direct evidence of this. However, events like the drought that struck the Levant in the thirteenth century BCE (Langgut et al. 2013) could also have affected the area of Byblos.

Finally, the sea was an important resource, both for its natural products and as a gate to international trade. Fishing was certainly practised. Murex, and therefore purple, is another potential resource obtained from the sea. There is no direct evidence for its production in the city but the purple industry is attested in Late Bronze Age Ugarit and could have been present in Byblos as well (Curtis 1999, 21; Schaeffer 1951; see §5.6.5).

Many of these natural resources were unevenly distributed within the kingdom, so that their availability was influenced by changes in borders and territorial extent. In particular, the area north of Batruna is suited for agriculture and has a long coast with good natural harbours. Forests were certainly widespread,<sup>4</sup>

4 Mikesell 1969; Dalix and Chaaya 2007–2008; see also Pap. Anastasi I (19,2–4) with its description of thick forests covering the land of Magara, possibly located north of Byblos (§5.6.1).

and some trees were typical and unique of the area. The Cilician fir, in particular, likely grew only north of the Kadisha Valley (§5.2.5.1). Controlling these northern areas, as Byblos seems to have done before the Amarna Age (§5.2.5.1; 5.4.5; 5.4.6), was no doubt economically lucrative, whereas losing them, as most likely happened during the war with Amurru, would have had a strong negative impact on the city's economy.

### 3.2 *Regular Trade and Local Industries*

The timber industry was central to the economy of Byblos. In Roman times the exploitation of the forest was regulated by the state (2007–2008; Semaan 2015, 101, *passim*) and the evidence suggests that some similar regulation existed also in the Iron Age, when the Assyrians controlled the region (Semaan 2015, 97–98, 101). Although it is possible that a similar control existed in the Late Bronze Age, evidence is lacking. Forests and trees, however, did need to be taken care of, and although no explicit source attests their existence, it is likely that specialised lumberjacks and nurserymen existed in the Iron Age, and therefore possibly in the Bronze Age Levant.<sup>5</sup> Thureau-Dangin (1920, 29), for instance, published a text mentioning some “*nukaribbu* of the Hittites” supplying some kind of nuts. In Mesopotamia the word *nukaribbu* primarily refers to people involved in the date cultivation (*CAD* iii.323–27), but as dates are not characteristic of the Hittite territory, it is likely that in this text the term refers to some kind of gardeners or nurserymen attending some other kind of plant or tree. Something similar could have existed in Lebanon, to manage the local forests.

It seems that when the Egyptian armies were in the region, Egyptian forces took part in the timbering activities (§5.2.1, §5.2.3 and §5.2.5.1). The discovery of three Egyptian copper axes in Lebanon<sup>6</sup> dating to the Old Kingdom suggests that the Egyptians may have had an active role in the timbering activities already during the Early Bronze Age (Semaan 2015, 100).

While excavating Byblos, Dunand found various bronze tools that could have been used by lumberjacks or carpenters, such as axes, adzes, drills, chisels, a gouge, and a hammer (Deshayes 1960, 59, *passim*, Semaan 2015, 99–100). None of them, however, can be securely dated to the Late Bronze Age. Axes and ropes were certainly used to fell the trees in Lebanon, as in Seti I's relief in Karnak (Meiggs 1982, 16, 331; Wachsmann 1998, 310; Bardinet 2008, 254–55; Semaan 2015, 100).

5 See Dalix and Chaaya 2007–2008, 240–43, for a discussion of some possible clues suggesting some form of management of the forests in the Bible and in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

6 One from the area of the Nahr Ibrahim and two from Byblos (Deshayes 1960, I 245–47, II 103).

Lebanese archaeologists have identified ancient paths in the forests, but their date could not be established and it is impossible to say whether they were used during the Bronze Age or only in later periods (Semaan 2015, 102–6). Little is also known about the way logs were brought from the forests to the coast. It has been suggested that floating in rivers could have been used during spring, when the level of the waters was higher due to the rain and the melting of the snow on the mountains. However, Semaan (2015, 108–13, with bibliography) has argued that Lebanese rivers, with their often narrow valleys, may not be suited for such a transportation technique. By contrast, oxen were certainly used to pull the logs, as attested by the Gebel Barkal stele (§5.2.1) and by the later *Tale of Wenamun* (Wen. 2:43; Schipper 2005, 82; §5.7). We do not know, however, if they were also used to bring the wood down from the mountains – which would then imply the presence of some form of prepared road – or just for secondary activities.

The wood was either exported or used by the local carpenters to construct buildings and ships. Although no source is available to confirm it, it is likely that the timbering activities followed seasonal patterns. Trees were probably felled during winter and possibly brought down from the mountains in spring. Then, the wood probably had to be seasoned and dried for some years (Semaan 2015, 101–2) before being exported. The shipping may have taken place in summer, the sailing season in the eastern Mediterranean. We do not know where the ships transporting the logs were loaded. A harbour may have existed in the bay south of the city, as the current port of Byblos is rather small for such activities (§2.2). Some timber could also have been fetched and loaded away from the city itself. During the reign of Thutmose III, in particular, the area of Ullassa and its wood industry may have been controlled and exploited by Byblos (§5.2.5.1).

Likewise, we know that Byblian carpenters built ships, but we do not know where the city's shipyards were. As discussed above (§5.2.5.1), the shipbuilding mentioned in the Gebel Barkal stele could have taken place near Ullassa, although some shipyard must also have been present near Byblos itself, perhaps in the hypothetical harbour south of the city.

We know nothing about the patterns of exploitation of the forests, but it is likely that the most accessible trees near big rivers and those at lower altitudes and on the smoother foothills of Mount Lebanon were exploited first and more intensely (Semaan 2015, 101). In this respect, the valley of the Nahr Ibrahim, near Byblos, and the Kadisha Valley, near Ullassa, may have been ideal places for timbering activities. The control of these areas, and of the Kadisha Valley in particular, could have been one of the factors driving the interest of Byblos in those northern territories and fuelling the hostility between Byblos and Ullassa (§5.2.5.1).

Textiles were imported, exported, and produced locally. The distribution of spindle whorls points to the presence of production areas within the city, but it is not yet possible to put these objects into a precise chronological frame (§3.4). Some kind of textile trade is attested by a tablet from Ugarit (§5.6.5.1, RS 19.28), and the *Tale of Wenamun* mentions textiles imported to Byblos (see below). The text discussed in §5.6.4, however, attests that luxurious textiles from the city were appreciated in the Hittite Empire. We do not know if these textiles were produced in Byblos or only reworked or dyed there, but it is remarkable that this is the only known mention of the city in Hittite documents.

Information about imports to Byblos can be obtained both from archaeology and from written sources. Egyptian objects are archeologically well attested, and some types are fairly common. Scarabs, possibly used as seals or amulets, are numerous (§3.3). A few bullae<sup>7</sup> attest the presence of something sealed. Egyptian stone vessels are also abundant. A few fragments inscribed with Egyptian royal names attest that Egyptian-made stone vessels were imported during all of the main historical periods, including the New Kingdom, notably the reign of Ramses II (see §3.5 and §4.8.1). However, since most of the fragments found by Dunand have not been studied in detail, it is not yet possible to assess their overall spatial and chronological distribution, or to evaluate the ratio between imports and local productions. These vessels could have contained cosmetics, medicines, perfumed oils, and ointments, and perhaps even beer and wine in the largest ones. They were certainly luxurious and expensive commodities, and they hint at a highly lucrative trade (Sparks 1996; Sparks 2003).

Fragments of Mycenaean and Cypriot vessels, as well as a bronze figurine possibly from Byblos found in the sea in front of Sicily, near Selinunte<sup>8</sup> show that the city was in contact with Cyprus and the Aegean world, although questions remain about the nature and dynamics behind these western interactions.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the presence of non-Egyptian Late Bronze scarabs imported from the southern Levant<sup>10</sup> suggests, not surprisingly, that the city was in

7 Dunand II no. 9417, 11676, undated (Boschloos 2011–2012, BYB584, BYB519) but both from the area of the Obelisk Temple.

8 It has been suggested it was brought there by Mycenaean traders – see Tusa 1973; Purpura 1981.

9 §3.2; §4.7. See also Giannakoulas (2013, 193–94), who suggests that Byblos and other Levantine cities may have been exporting Egyptian stone vessels to the Aegean area, at least before the Late Bronze Age.

10 See Boschloos 2011–2012: BYB 150 = no excavation number, BYB159 = Dunand no. I 1170, BYB229 = Dunand no. I 1425, BYB231 = Dunand no. I 1427, BYB237 = Dunand no. I 1571, BYB353 = Dunand no. II 6844, BYB355 = Dunand no. II 6846, BYB410 = Dunand no. II 7413, BYB437 = Dunand no. II 7772, with references also to the excavation numbers, when present. See database and online supplement – cf. Appendix B.



contact with this region. More information about these interactions could perhaps be obtained from an analysis of the sherds found on the site.

Written sources are also informative about the commercial exchanges of the city. Textiles were imported to Byblos, as attested by a Ugaritic tablet (§5.6.5.1, RS 19.28). Moreover, in the *Tale of Wenamun*, we read that the Egyptians paid for the wood with 4 *tb*-vessels of gold, 1 *k3kmn*-vessel, 5 *tb*-vessels of silver, 10 garments of royal linen, 10 veils of fine Upper Egyptian linen, 500 papyrus rolls (or “smooth cloths”), 500 ox-hides, 500 ropes, 20 sacks of lentils, and 30 baskets of fish<sup>11</sup> (Wen. 2:39–41, Schipper 2005, 80–81). A few of these items need attention. The possible mention of papyrus rolls is significant: a common Greek word for papyrus is βύβλος, which derives from the name of Byblos,<sup>12</sup> likely because the city played a central role in the trade of this material with the Aegean regions. Similarly, one may wonder if also the Egyptian cloths mentioned in Wenamun would have been meant to stay in Byblos or were destined for re-export, especially if they were rare and high-quality items.

It is clear that Byblos was not only a source and arrival point for products and resources, but also an intermediary hub where goods were redistributed to other parts of the regional commercial network. The Amarna letters confirm this. In *EA* 126:4–6 we read that the Pharaoh asked the king of Byblos for boxwood from Ugarit and Salkhi. In *EA* 77:6–15, by contrast, Rib-Hadda claimed that he could not send copper and *š/sinnu* (probably ivory, possibly worked ivory)<sup>13</sup> to the Pharaoh (see §5.4.4). Since there is no native copper in the region of Byblos, Rib-Hadda was acting as a middle-man, first importing the metal from an unknown source, perhaps Cyprus, and then exporting it towards Egypt.

Finally, the city also exchanged knowledge and skills. Zeker-Ba'al, the king of Byblos in the *Tale of Wenamun*, says it explicitly: “Thus craftsmanship came from it (Egypt) in order to reach the place where I am!” (Wen. 2:21, Schipper 2005, 73). A good example of this non-material and cultural trade is writing. Egyptian hieroglyphs are attested in Byblos from the Old Kingdom onwards

11 Probably Nile Perch.

12 Or perhaps the other way round: it has been suggested, not very convincingly in my opinion, that the Greek name of the city could have been influenced by the word for papyrus, which was imported from there (Beekes 2010, 246–47). Be that as it may, the strong linguistic association in Greek between the word for papyrus and the name of Byblos is clear. See also Wachsmann 1998, 313.

13 Fragments of ivory were found in the tomb of Ahiiram (Montet 1928–1929, nos. 876, 877; see Homsy-Gottwalles 2009, 422), but we do not know if they date to the Late Bronze Age or were introduced in the tomb later (see §4.8), and we do not know if the ivory was local or imported. As for the latter point, isotopic analysis may help determining its origin.

(Montet 1928–1929; 1962; 1964), and they probably played a role in the development of the so-called Byblos pseudo-hieroglyphic script (Dunand 1945, 171–73; Sznycer 1994). For its part, Byblos probably exported people skilled in seamananship, shipbuilding, and carpentry. The existence of a Temple of Ba'al and Astarte in Peru-Nefer, the Eighteenth Dynasty main harbour and shipyards of Egypt, suggests the presence there of a Levantine community of artisans building ships for the Pharaohs (Zayed 1987; Collombert and Coulon 2000, 217–23). Workers or sailors from Byblos could have been among them, especially in light of the text in the tomb TT143, which may imply that Byblian ships (and therefore Byblian crews) were involved in Egyptian expeditions to Punt (§5.2.4).

Moreover, in the Hebrew Bible, we read that “craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram, and workers from Byblos cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple” (1 Kings 5:18), while a poetic text in Ezekiel comparing the city of Tyre to a ship states that “Veteran craftsmen of Byblos were on board as shipwrights to caulk your seams” (Ezek. 27:9). The ship in the latter passage is described as being made of the best materials available for each of its parts, and therefore the fact that the carpenters are said to come from Byblos suggests that the city enjoyed international renown in this craft. These later passages could reflect practices that went back to the Late Bronze Age.

Whether the people in Peru-Nefer were from Byblos or not, they were likely from the Levant, and the presence of a cult of Ba'al and Astarte there clearly suggests that they moved to Egypt bringing at least some of their (in this case religious) traditions with them. Nothing sure can be said about their social status within the Egyptian society, but they were certainly not slaves. In fact, the presence of a temple dedicated to their foreign gods could suggest that they enjoyed some privilege or special position. At the same time, their presence in Egypt certainly had an impact on Egyptian society itself and it is likely that such communities played a role in the introduction into Egypt of Levantine cultural elements. It has been suggested, for instance, that Peru-Nefer contributed to the diffusion in Egypt of West-Semitic cults and mythemes after Thutmose III's campaigns, in particular during Amenhotep II's reign (Collombert and Coulon 2000, 217–19). There is no source to assess the role of Byblos in these dynamics, but considering its traditional religious connections with Egypt as seat of the Lady of Byblos, it would not be surprising if the city was indeed involved in these phenomena.

### 3.3 *Exceptional Exchanges – Egyptian Royal Expeditions*

In addition to the ordinary commercial network described in the previous section, Byblos was reached by exceptional missions organised by the Pharaohs. These ventures are well attested both archaeologically and in written sources,

and they appear to have occurred in all the main historical periods.<sup>14</sup> One such mission, mentioned both in royal and non-royal inscriptions, took place during the reign of Thutmose III (§5.2.1; §5.2.3; §5.2.5.2), while others heading towards Lebanon in general are recorded for later kings.<sup>15</sup> It is possible, even likely, that at least some of these later expeditions were directed towards Byblos, as suggested by the *Tale of Wenamun*.

These expeditions probably stood out because of the kind, quantity, and quality of the wood imported, as well as because of the scale (and revenue) of the transaction. It is possible that wood was regularly exported to Egypt also within the ordinary regional network (see §6.3.0.2), but it is likely that expeditions seeking flagpoles and wood for the bark of Amun and other furniture of the Temple of Karnak had ritual connotations and therefore were outside the range of normal trade (Baines 2009). We do not know what Sennefri brought as “offerings” to the goddess of Byblos in his expedition during the reign of Thutmose III (§5.2.3), but in view of the importance of his request, the transaction must have been far above the average of the ordinary exchanges in volume and value, and its impact on the economy of Byblos must thus have been significant, at least in the short term.

### 3.4 *Other Economic Activities*

Besides trade, Byblos was involved in, and sometimes the victim of, other kinds of economic activities. A tablet from Ugarit (§5.6.5.1, RS 18.25, lines 10–18) may show that Byblos was leasing ships to other coastal cities. This document is unique and it is impossible to evaluate the economic impact of this practice.

It is also likely that Byblos levied taxes on trade and foreign goods reaching its harbours and the harbours of its dependent cities. Similar taxes are attested in Ugarit (Heltzer 1978, 130). Again, however, it is impossible to establish the economic scale of any such practice.

Providing services to the Egyptian overlords was another source of income for the city, primarily for its king. This is the case of the Amarna period king Rib-Hadda, who asked indirectly to be paid for helping an Egyptian envoy to enter Sumur (§5.4.5). Moreover, it is possible that at least during the Amarna period local rulers were involved – or attempted to be involved – in the administration and management of Egyptian possessions in the area (see §5.4.5).

14 See Bardinete 2008, 193–306 for a discussion of all the attestations of the use of imported Lebanese wood in Egyptian temples from the Old Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period.

15 See Bardinete 2008, 242–50 (attestations of later Eighteenth Dynasty kings), 251–75 (Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties evidence).

Since they were interested in undertaking this activity, they were probably making some kind of profit from it.

Byblos was probably also profiting from its support to the Egyptian army. At the time of Thutmose III, Egypt may have rewarded the city by endorsing the expansion of its influence northwards (see §5.2.5.1). And naturally, by gaining territory Byblos would have gained resources.

At the same time, Byblos was expected to pay tribute to Egypt. The Annals of Thutmose III record the supplying of harbours and the payment of yearly *b3k*-contributions by the cities of Lebanon, probably including Byblos (§5.2.1; §5.2.5.1). Moreover, it has been convincingly argued (e.g., Pintore 1972; Pintore 1973; Frandsen 1979, 174–80; Liverani 1990b, *passim*; Murnane 2000, 103–4; Morris 2005, *passim*), that before the Nineteenth Dynasty the Levantine cities were also expected to strategically and economically support the Egyptian armies campaigning in the region. In this respect, if the cities of the southern Lebanese coast submitted themselves to the Egyptians with written treaties rather than being conquered by them, then the burden of the Egyptian domination may have been less heavy than for less collaborative polities (§5.2.5.1).

A final economic activity attested in the sources is piracy. In particular, in the Amarna letters *EA* 113:14 and *EA* 114:15–20 Rib-Hadda accuses Yapah-Hadda of Beirut of acts of piracy against his ships and his territory. Byblos is presented as the victim. There is no evidence that people from Byblos actively practised piracy, but this possibility cannot be excluded, and it would be surprising if they did not, especially in wartime, and against regional adversaries and enemies. The economic returns – or losses – deriving from piracy are impossible to estimate, but it is likely that the phenomenon, alongside brigandage on land roads, increased in periods of political instability.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.5 *Byblos Economy – Summary*

The Late Bronze Age economy of Byblos was more complex and diversified than can be appreciated by looking only at individual sources. The kingdom had at its disposal resources such as animal, agricultural, forest, and sea products. Many of these resources were both used locally and exported. Timber was a major commercial asset, but it was not the only one. Moreover, the city did not only trade raw materials, but it also exported finished products such as textiles or ship components. Byblos was a transit node where incoming goods were redistributed to other parts of the eastern Mediterranean commercial network. Knowledge and skills were also traded, and it is possible that

<sup>16</sup> In general, for piracy in the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean see Wachsmann 1998, 320–21.

Byblian craftsmen were employed abroad. The city's network was wide and diverse: it interacted with local and regional political entities such as Ugarit, Tyre, or Yarimuta, with neighbouring regions such as Canaan and Cyprus, with macro-regional powers such as Hatti and Egypt, and with the relatively distant Mycenaean world. While under Egyptian domination, the city probably had to pay tribute to its overlords. However, its loyalty, support, and services may have won it rewards that made such domination economically lighter to bear, or even lucrative. Furthermore, the intensification of international relations among major powers and the geopolitical reorganization of the region that followed the creation of Thutmose III's empire led to a period of general peace and probably of commercial prosperity for all the centres of the coast,<sup>17</sup> including Byblos.

Various aspects of Byblos's economy and economic landscape, however, remain obscure. For instance, we know that the Hittites were importing textiles from the city (§5.6.4), but we do not know what Byblos obtained in exchange. The Hittite Empire, however, controlled several resources that could have interested the city (such as copper, silver, and gold – Bryce 1998, 27). Similar problems exist for many of the other attested trading connections of Byblos. For instance, we have no evidence at all of trade with Mitanni and inner Syria in general, but this is likely due to a gap in the evidence, rather than to a real lack of interactions. Similarly, we know that metals, especially copper, tin, and bronze, were crucial commodities traded in great quantities by ship, as attested by the Uluburun and other shipwrecks (Bass 1991; Pulak 1998; Pulak 2008; Galili et al. 2013; Goren 2013; Zangani 2016), but we have almost no evidence about the involvement of Byblos in these exchanges. Future analyses of the metal objects found in the city could shed some light on the issue, but for now the available evidence does not allow to properly assess Byblos's role in this trade.<sup>18</sup> There is also a chronological problem: it has to be borne in mind that the sources used

<sup>17</sup> Although we do not have explicit sources for the years just after Thutmose III, the Amarna letters give us a glimpse of the regional economic landscape at the end of the dynasty. What appears is a vital and well developed commercial network where various goods such as natural resources and luxury items are exchanged among local polities as well as between major powers and minor political actors (see above §5.4.4). The numerous examples of luxury goods belonging to the so-called “international style” found in Egypt in Eighteenth Dynasty contexts are also worthy of attention (Feldman 2006, 143–44). Although it is clear that this apparent “abundance” could be due to the accidents of preservation, and although it is possible that at least part of these luxurious goods were the result of plunder or tribute rather than trade, they hint to a period of general prosperity and general cultural interconnection.

<sup>18</sup> For other examples of possible traded goods not attested in the sources see Wachsmann 1998, 313.



above often come from different periods. Therefore, the picture that can be obtained from them is a conflation of fragments of information that may not be directly related to one another. Nevertheless, such conflation (summarised in fig. 6.1) does give an idea of the complexity and dynamism of the economic panorama of Byblos.

The form and nature of trade in the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean are difficult to define. The discussion centres on two main issues. First, while there is abundant evidence for trade based on a system of reciprocal gifts, the extent and role of trade of a more narrowly commercial nature remains unclear. Second, while it is clear that palaces and ruling elites had a crucial role in international exchanges, the extent and nature of private initiatives, as well as their development in the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age, is still much debated (Liverani 1979a; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991; Snodgrass 1991; Cline 1995; Routledge and McGeough 2009; McGeough 2015).

The evidence from Byblos is too scattered to bring any decisive contribution to these matters, although future analyses of the excavated material

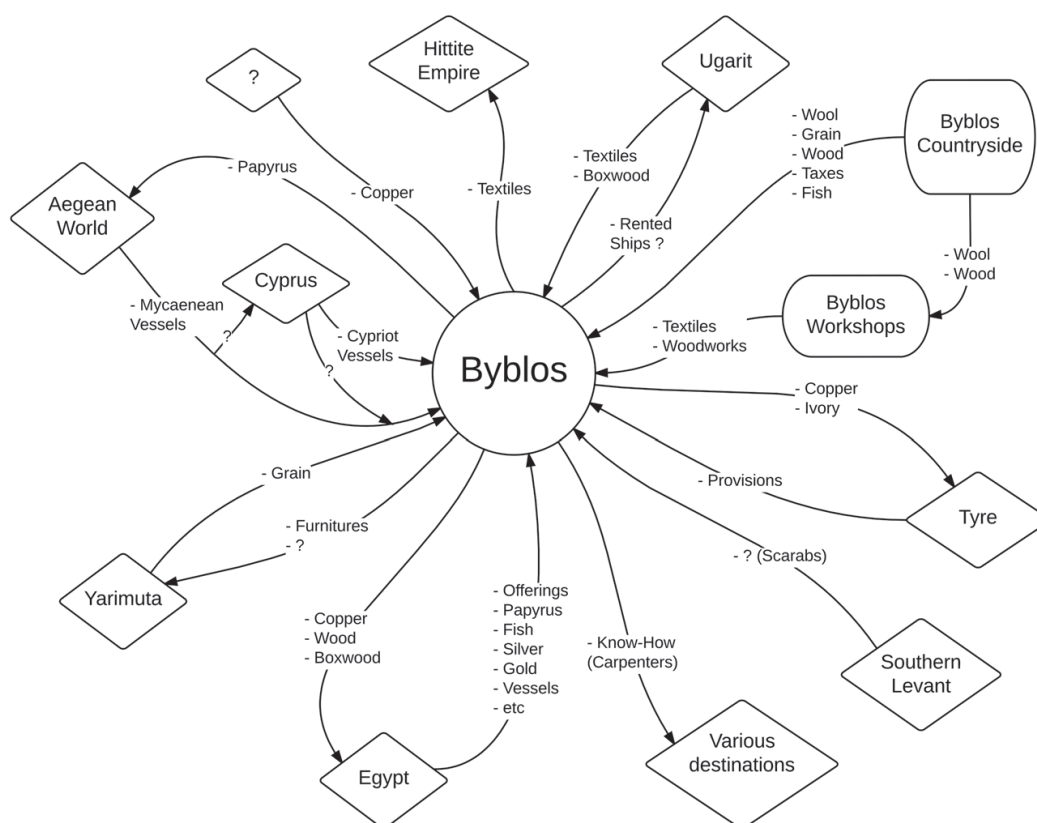


FIGURE 6.1 Diagram summarizing the attested economic interactions of Byblos. Rhombi indicate foreign actors, while actors within the kingdom of Byblos are indicated with rounded squares

could perhaps supply new data.<sup>19</sup> However, some observations that agree with what has been suggested so far, and perhaps even some new insights, can be proposed.

First, the king of Byblos was involved in the city's economic interactions, as is shown both by the Amarna letters (§5.4.4) and by a memorandum from Ugarit (§5.6.5, RS 18.25). Similarly, Byblos's ruling group traded within frameworks and narratives of gifts exchange and offerings, as shown by both the Egyptian texts (§5.2.5.3) and the Amarna letters (§5.4.4, see also Liverani 2001, 135–54).

By contrast, private trade is not mentioned explicitly in the written sources. However, the abundance of Mycenaean and Cypriot pottery in Necropolis K suggests that the wares and goods from these regions were not reserved exclusively to the palace. This agrees with what has been observed in other Levantine sites such as Ugarit or Sarepta and may imply some form of private initiative in their trade (Bell 2005; Bell 2009; Routledge and McGeough 2009, 23–24). A system of redistribution stemming from the ruling group cannot, however, be excluded, but the absence of archaeological remains of the palace of Byblos prevents any assessment of the dynamics of circulation of these goods in the city and of the role of the court in these interactions.

Another significant element emerging from the Byblian data is the conception of international commercial trade lying outside any framework of reciprocal gifts. Evidence of this can be found in Rib-Hadda's claims that he and the people of Byblos were forced to give their sons and daughters, and the furniture of their houses in order to obtain food from the land of Yarimuta (*EA* 68:27–28, 74:11–17, 75:11–14, 81:38–41, 85:12–15, 90:36–39, 105:84–86, 112:26–30; see §5.4.4). Although such a claim is largely rhetorical and may not reflect a real exchange, at least in his extreme terms (Liverani 1974), the conception underlying such a statement is evident: Rib-Hadda is saying that the dire conditions of the city forced his people<sup>20</sup> to give away something that they cared about and that they were certainly not happy to trade in order to obtain vital basic goods. Such an

19 For instance, a chemical analyses of the various metal objects or a petrographic analyses of the pottery combined with a study of their distribution across the city could yield information about their geographical origin and about the social groups that used them in Byblos.

20 Rib-Hadda's phrasing in *EA* 85:12–15 could suggest a private initiative on the part of his subjects, but the mechanisms involved could have been different, so that, for instance, he could have dealt with Yarimuta in the name of his subjects. In various letters he talks about “our sons and daughters” (*EA* 68:27–28, 74:11–17, 75:11–14, 90:36–39), while in *EA* 105:84–86 he claims that “Yapah-Hadda does not let my ships [in]to Yarimuta,” and in *EA* 112:26–30 that “everything of] mine [is gon]e through being sol[d i]n the land of Yarimuta for provisions to keep me alive.” This implies that he was personally involved in the trade

economic interaction is different from the exchanges of luxury goods that are usually mentioned in the Amarna letters, and it cannot be interpreted as belonging within a system of reciprocal gifts. Rather, since Rib-Hadda's aim was likely to obtain as much as possible while giving as little as possible, some conception of commercial trade and therefore of agreed price and "profit" must have been implied (compare Snodgrass 1991, 15). Clearly, the "irrationality" characterizing the usual, gift-based interactions recorded in the Amarna letters and other contemporary sources (Liverani 1979a) has no place in the situation described by Rib-Hadda. It is also hard to imagine that Rib-Hadda and the people of Byblos would have sent their goods – whether young people and furniture, or something rhetorically less spectacular – to Yarimuta in exchange for unspecified or vaguely defined amounts of merchandise, as seems often to have been the case within the system of reciprocal gifts (Snodgrass 1991, 16–17).

These observations may suggest that the system of reciprocal gifts could work only so long as the societies involved were exchanging luxurious or non-primary items, and had a sufficiency or even a surplus of basic goods that assured them a relative economic autonomy. However, as soon as basic goods were needed – not just desired,<sup>21</sup> and other ways of acquiring them were not available any longer,<sup>22</sup> the system of exchanges became unbalanced, and the main goal of trade shifted away from maintaining social relations through the exchange of goods (Routledge and McGeough 2009, 26) and focused on the acquisition of necessities itself.

These considerations may explain why commercial trade is so difficult to identify in available Late Bronze Age sources: what we see in them is usually the social interactions and luxurious exchanges of societies and actors who were economically self-sufficient, or claimed to be so because of the ideological conventions and narratives required by their status (Snodgrass 1991, 16–17; Cline 1995; Liverani 2001, 155–59). By contrast, commercial trade in basic goods stems from a need and hence makes evident a weakness, and weakness has little place in the ideological narratives of the interactions recorded in the

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with Yarimuta, and thus might exclude that his subjects were acting independently and privately.

21 Basic goods, such as food or natural resources, may have been exchanged also within the system of reciprocal gifts, but this does not necessarily imply that they were needed, as they may have been exchanged as gift even in contexts where there was no scarcity of them. Therefore, in such cases the exchange of a potentially basic items could also be considered as an exchange of non-primary goods, because the actors involved may have *desired* them, but were not necessarily *in need* for them.

22 For example because the actor was not in a condition or position to use violence, for instance in the form of piracy, war, or looting to acquire what was needed.

Amarna letters and comparable sources. Such a trade, however, does appear in Rib-Hadda's letters, and this probably because of their exceptional character: in contrast with other correspondents of the Pharaohs, he does not present himself as a strong ruler who asks for gifts but does not need anything. Instead, he writes to the Pharaoh as a besieged, weak ruler in need of everything, and within this narrative he finds it acceptable to talk about this kind of commercial exchanges.

It thus appears that the concept of commercial trade was present in Byblos, and that it emerges in the sources because of the real or rhetorical hardship deriving from the war with Amurru. Similar dynamics could have taken place in other coastal centres. It could thus be worth reassessing the evidence from other sites from a perspective that takes into consideration the general state of need – or lack thereof – of the various actors, as this could provide new insights into the elusive Late Bronze Age commercial trade. A fresh look at the data from such a perspective may also shed new light on some economic aspects of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. It has often been observed that a major distinction between the two periods is the weakening or disappearance of the system of reciprocal gifts and the emergence of commercial, profit-based trade (e.g., Bell 2009 with references). One may wonder whether the turmoil of the end of the Late Bronze Age created a condition of need that could in turn have worked as a catalyst in the transition between these two trade systems.

#### 4 Society in Byblos

Various actors of Byblos's society emerge from the texts and the archaeological evidence. A king and a royal family<sup>23</sup> are attested, as well as cultic personnel managing the temples (§5.4.2), soldiers and mercenaries (§5.4.5), peasantry (§5.4.5), carpenters (§5.2.1, §6.3.0.2), and people producing textiles (§3.4, §5.6.4, §6.3.0.2). Other social groups, such as merchants, scribes, and administrators must have existed, but no source mentions them. All these people interacted, had specific functions, and performed distinct activities within the city. Available sources, however, are usually silent about this daily life reality, which therefore cannot be discussed in detail.

23 See §5.4.6 for discussion, especially about Rib-Hadda's brother and son, and *EA* 136:8–15 for a reference to the queen and other members of the royal family being in disagreement with the king.

Something can be said about the economic and politico-diplomatic scenes in the city. The Amarna letters and the documents from Ugarit show that it was the king and his court who entertained economic and diplomatic relations both with international powers like Egypt (Amarna letters §5.4) and with other local political entities (documents from Ugarit: §5.6.5). The Temple of the Lady of Byblos was involved in the trade with Egypt since the Old Kingdom (§4.6; §5.2.3; §5.2.5.2), and the goddess may have functioned as a cultural bridge facilitating these interactions and exchanges since that very early age (Diego Espinel 2002).

During the New Kingdom, the following evidence suggest a rather complex situation:

- Egyptian objects are attested in the Temple of the Lady of Byblos, but they are present also in other sanctuaries of the city. In particular, remarkable numbers of New Kingdom objects were found in the area of the Obelisk Temple (§4.4, in particular §4.4.3–4.4.7)
- As discussed in §3.3.1, pre-New Kingdom scarabs and Eighteenth Dynasty scarabs tend to be found in groups and are concentrated in or around temples. Later scarabs, by contrast, are found in isolation, scattered around the site.
- In the Amarna letters, the Pharaoh traded for goods with the king of Byblos without mentioning the temple (§5.4.4).
- Mycenaean sherds are found scattered across the city but not in the temples. They are also abundant in the tombs of Necropolis K (§3.2, §4.7).

A complex network of interactions can be glimpsed in this evidence. First of all, temples seem to have been extraneous to trade with the Aegean world, at least as far as it can be inferred from the ceramic evidence. The relative abundance of Aegean sherds in Necropolis K and their scattered presence in the city outside of its sacred areas may suggest that their trade was mainly a civil/royal affair. This can be argued especially for kraters and open vessels in general, which were likely imported for their intrinsic value (§3.2). In the case of closed vessels, however, the content may have been the true object of the exchange (§3.2), and as such it may have ended up being used in the temples without leaving any ceramic evidence there.

By contrast, it is clear that the temples of Byblos played a role in the trade with Egypt and both written sources and archaeological evidence attest that Egyptian goods were deposited in them (§5.4.2). The Temple of the Lady, however, did not have the monopoly that could have been imagined on the basis of the Egyptian sources, and the amount of Egyptian material found in the Obelisk Temple and in other sanctuaries demonstrates their participation in these economic exchanges. The nature of their involvement, however, remains



unclear, and it is impossible to say whether they interacted directly with the Egyptians or belonged to a redistribution network that had its centre in some other institutions of the city, such as the royal palace or the temple of the Lady itself. The Amarna letters, in fact, show that also Rib-Hadda, the king of Byblos,<sup>24</sup> played a role in the exchanges with Egypt. Moreover, the dissemination patterns of the scarabs seem to indicate that the way Egyptian goods were circulating within the city changed at some point between the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the Twentieth Dynasty (§3.3.1).

Since the written sources suggest that the king of Byblos interacted with Egypt within the ordinary regional network, while the temples were relevant to royal expeditions such as that led by Sennefri's, this change may reflect a modification in the dynamics underlying such royal expeditions. A few clues seem to support this possibility. First, although there were expeditions to Byblos after the time of Thutmose III (see above), none was celebrated in a comparable way to that of this king. Indeed, very often no explicit mention exists for later expeditions, and in most cases we can only infer their existence from records of the remaking of the temple flagpoles and of the bark of Amun (Bardinet 2008, *passim*). Obviously, random factors can affect the survival of royal inscriptions, therefore the possibility that this lack of explicit records is entirely due just to the accidents of preservation cannot be ruled out.

Three statues found in Byblos in the area of the Temple of the Lady and representing Sheshonq I, Osorkon I, and Osorkon II respectively are also worthy of attention here (Montet 1928–1929, 49–59; Dunand 1939, 115–17 – see §4.3). These statues were likely donated by the Egyptians in the occasion of some official transaction, but nothing in them suggests that they were meant as offerings for the Lady of Byblos. In fact, two of them bear clearly secondary Phoenician inscriptions affirming that it is the kings of Byblos who dedicated them to the goddess.<sup>25</sup> It thus seems that these Twenty-second Dynasty Pharaohs interacted with the kings of the city, rather than with the Temple of the Lady, and the involvement of the goddess was a successive and local matter. This pattern contrasts with that of earlier periods, when the Egyptians

24 §5.4.4; the involvement of the “chiefs of Lebanon” in the supplying of wood for the Pharaoh is mentioned also at the time of Thutmose III, e.g., in the Gebel Barkal stele (§5.2.1). The king of Byblos is not explicitly singled out, but it is reasonable to assume he was one of them.

25 Montet 1928–1929, 49–59. It is worth noticing that both the Phoenician inscriptions asked the Lady of Byblos to grant more years of life to the kings of the city, which has an exact parallel in the offer Wenamun make to king Zeker-Ba'al (Wen. 2:57–58), Schipper 2005, 88–89.

themselves used to bring offerings to the Lady.<sup>26</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that in the *Tale of Wenamun* the Egyptian envoy negotiates for the wood for the bark of Amun only with the king of Byblos, while there is no mention of the Lady of Byblos or of any other temple. This is in contrast with the perceivable presence of the goddess in the accounts of Thutmose III's expedition in the Gebel Barkal stele and in Sennefri's biography (§5.2.1, §5.2.3 – see also Baines 2009).

These observations are not in themselves decisive. For instance, one could argue that the evidence is affected by literary factors, such as differences in the genres and purposes of the sources. When combined, however, they all point in the same direction, suggesting a change in the dynamics underlying royal expeditions. Ideological factors, and in particular a change in the Egyptian ideological perception of the cosmographic structure of the world may have been crucial in this development.

## 5 Ideology

### 5.1 *The Lady of Byblos*

The Lady of Byblos is the most recurrent character in the history of the city, and is clearly prominent during the Late Bronze Age. She was associated with Hathor and venerated by the Egyptians since the Old Kingdom, and continued to be so during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Thutmose III and Ramses II sponsored works in her temple in the city, as attested by archaeological evidence and written sources (§5.2.2; §3.5; §4.5). A Nineteenth Dynasty statue probably from Deir El-Medina (§5.6.3) and a Ramesside papyrus with magical spells (§5.6.2) mentioning her show that she was also known in Egyptian non-royal contexts.

During the Eighteenth Dynasty her temple, and possibly other temples in the city, played a crucial role in the politico-economic relations with the Egyptian monarchy, as suggested by the Gebel Barkal stele (§5.2.1), the biography of Sennefri (§5.2.3), the statue of Djehuty (§3.5), and some passages of the Amarna letters mentioning the presence of Egyptian goods in the city's temples (§5.4.2).

At the time, the Temple of the Lady was probably used as a religious and cultural bridge in economic exchanges between Byblos and Egypt: by making

26 See the pre-New Kingdom objects found by Dunand and Montet bearing dedicatory inscriptions (Helck 1994; Scandone Matthiae 1994), or §5.2.3 and §5.2.5.2 where the case of Sennefri is discussed.

offerings to the temple(s) of the city, the Egyptian kings were ideologically legitimizing their trade with a polity of inferior status.<sup>27</sup> Within this ideological narrative, the goddess of the city replaced the local ruler as economic partner for the Pharaohs (Liverani 2001, 168–69, 171–72 and *passim*), thus turning the whole trade into an ideologically acceptable exchange between Egyptian kings and (Egyptian) gods. The Egyptian goods delivered to Byblos were thus described as offerings to the goddess, while the resources of Byblos were ideologically reinterpreted as gifts to Egypt from the Lady, from Amun (in the Gebel Barkal stele), or from other deities. The Temple of the goddess and other cult places in the city were crucial for this narrative, because they were the physically receivers of these offerings (§4.3; §4.4.7; §4.5). The actual rulers of Byblos and Lebanon in general were not presented as the active protagonists of these interactions: usually they were just described as simple executants of the gods' will, as is stated for instance in the Gebel Barkal stele. Moreover, the sanctuary of the goddess in Byblos may have even been considered as an "Egyptian" temple, as suggested by the biography of Minmose (§5.2.2). Such narrative implies an important ideological distinction between the resources obtained from Byblos and the goods the Egyptians provided in exchange. Within such ideological frame, the resources from Byblos were interpreted as foreign products brought to Egypt by foreign leaders according to the will of Egyptian gods. By contrast, goods from Egypt were presented as pious donations within a system that was exclusively Egyptian and that involved only actors identified as Egyptians, either because they were truly so (the Pharaoh) or because they were ideologically framed as such (the temples in Byblos and the gods of the city). It is possible, perhaps even probable, that only Egyptian royal missions were framed within this ideological narrative. Although there is virtually no explicit evidence for that, it can be assumed that regular and ordinary trade between Egypt and Byblos or the Levantine coast was a common reality and did not need such elaborated ideological justifications.

It is very likely that during the Eighteenth Dynasty the kings of Byblos were aware of this Egyptian royal ideological framework and tried to conform to its conventions. For example, Liverani (1974) and Pryke (2010) have observed that the Amarna letters of Rib-Hadda are built around recurrent rhetorical formulas and themes, such as the "blessings of the Lady of Byblos" and occasionally of other gods, including Amun, that he added very frequently to his standard introductory greetings (§5.4.2). Because contemporary letters sent by Rib-Hadda to other kings are not known, it is impossible to say if this was a rhetorical device that he reserved to the Egyptian correspondence or if this

27 As already suggested by Diego Espinel (2002) for the Old Kingdom.

was for him a general epistolary practice. Such blessings, however, seem to be absent in the one (later) letter from Byblos found in Ugarit (§5.6.5.1, RS 18.134). Rib-Hadda's attempts to support his requests by reminding the Pharaoh of the many Egyptian goods in the city temples or by suggesting that the Lady of Byblos was among the deities who appointed the Egyptian king to the throne, may also hint at his awareness of this ideological narrative, and may indicate that he was trying to manipulate the Egyptians through it.

The aim of Rib-Hadda seems to have been to attract the attention of his Egyptian interlocutors to the centrality of the goddess and to the long tradition of Egyptian veneration for her. This rhetoric was in harmony with the Egyptian ideological frame described above and could thus have been a fruitful tool to interact with Eighteenth Dynasty kings, at least until the Amarna period.

However, although we have no idea about how the letters of Rib-Hadda were perceived in Egypt, it is easy to imagine that constantly referring to the Lady of Byblos or even to Amun (e.g., *EA* 71:4, 77:3, 86:3, 87:5, 95:3) was not the best way to attract the sympathy of Akhenaton and his reformist court. Rib-Hadda's use of such rhetoric may suggest that he was not aware of, or did not fully understand, the events taking place in Egypt. Such a miscalculation may have come at a price and may have been one of the factors in the apparent Egyptian disinterest for the wars Byblos was fighting against Amurru.

There is no evidence of the evolution of this ideological framework after the Amarna period. As discussed below, however, some clues suggest that the perception of the city within the Egyptian ideological narratives may have changed, and that Byblos, as a result, may have lost some of its regional and international prestige and influence (Kilani 2016b; §6.5.0.2 below).

The city, however, maintained a religious renown also in later periods. The evidence from the reign of Ramses II shows that the Egyptians continued to worship and make devotions to the goddess, both in Egypt and in Byblos itself (§4.5; §5.6.1; §5.6.2; §5.6.3). This attention, however, seems to have been purely religious, as the goddess does not figure in any contemporary Egyptian account of interactions with the Levant. It is thus possible that in the Nineteenth Dynasty the importance of her, and her temple's, economic role in relations with Egypt may have been in decline. Later evidence supports this possibility. In the *Tale of Wenamun* the goddess of Byblos is not mentioned at all, and the protagonist bargains only with the ruler of the city (Liverani 2001, 170–75; Schipper 2005). Naturally, the tale is a literary composition and cannot be taken at face value, as ideological narratives could and probably did underlie it (see e.g., Baines 1999, 2009; Sass 2002). The narrative of the exchange of offerings and gifts between the Pharaoh and the Lady that was evident in the Eighteenth Dynasty sources, however, was clearly not one of them.

Finally, although this book focuses on Late Bronze Age Byblos, it is worth commenting briefly on the evolution of the Egyptian perception of the Lady of Byblos in the Iron Age and later periods. Until the New Kingdom only Hathor was attested as Egyptian equivalent of the goddess, while from the early first millennium Isis also began to be associated with her (Hollis 2009). Interestingly enough, more or less in the same time Isis began to assume a predominant position in Egypt as well (Münster 1968; *LÄ* III, 186–203). The cult of Adonis with its Osirian elements, attested in the city in classical times, is also worth being mentioned here (Servais-Soyez 1977, 1983; Griffiths 1980, 28–34; Lemaire 1986). These developments are all likely related and they probably reflect the attempt of accommodating the ancient links between Egypt and the Lady of Byblos within a new and strongly Isiac and Osirian Egyptian religious reality.

## 5.2 *Byblos and the Egyptian Ideological Frames*

In addition to the special relation connecting Egypt with its goddess (§6.5.0.1), Byblos was integrated into other Egyptian ideological frameworks. These frameworks changed over time, and so did the Egyptian perception of and interactions with Byblos that were based on them.<sup>28</sup>

The first ideological framework that has to be considered here consists in the Egyptian cosmography underlying the official royal narratives. As in many societies, Egyptians, or at least their ruling classes, had a well-organised geographical narrative, or cosmography, through which they conceptualised and described the structure of the world around them. Such Egyptian cosmography was composed of concentric layers with different characteristics. At the centre was Egypt, which was inherently positive (Allen 2003, 23; see also Loprieno 2001, 64–74). Just beyond Egypt itself were the *ḥ3swt*, “foreign lands” inhabited by *ḥ3styw*, “foreigners” who were conceived ideologically as chaotic, barbarian, and negative. The limits between Egypt and the *ḥ3swt* were defined by the *t3š(w)*, “frontier(s),” of Egypt, which coincided also with the ideological limits of the beneficial dominion of Pharaoh (Liverani 2001, 32; see Galán 1995, 101–35 for discussion). Beyond the *ḥ3swt*, there were instances of *t3 ntr*, “God’s Land,” namely another group of foreign countries that had positive connotations (Baines 2007, 14). They were sources of rare and precious goods (often referred to as *bj3w* or *bj3ywt*, “wonders,” “marvels”), were inhabited by friendly foreigners, and were often associated with Hathor (see Cooper 2011 for a discussion of the term and critical review of previous scholarship). *ḥ3swt*, “foreign lands,” and *t3 ntr*, “God’s Land,” do not seem to be divided by any defined border.

<sup>28</sup> I have already discussed some of these aspects in Kilani 2016b, which constitutes the core of the following discussion.



The expression “God’s Land” appears for the first time in the reign of Pepy II, and it is well attested in the Middle Kingdom and in later periods (Cooper 2011, 50–51). The concept of *t3 ntr* seems to be associated with the whole eastern half of the horizon where the sun rises, from north to south, and may have to be understood in opposition to the west in the broadest sense, which was associated with sunset, death, and the Netherworld (Cooper 2011, *passim*).

Two real geographical entities appear to have been archetypes of this idealised God’s Land. One was Punt, in the south, the other Byblos, in the north. As biographical texts show, Punt and Byblos stood in a positive complementary geographical opposition<sup>29</sup> and enjoyed a privileged position within the Egyptian geographical imaginary at least since the Old Kingdom, as attested by many references to travels to both places in Old and Middle Kingdom biographical texts.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond the God’s Land, there were the edges of the world. Various terms were used to define them, among which the most common were *phww/phwy* “ends” and *drw* “ends,” “limits,” which could qualify both the *t3* “land” or the *pt* “sky” (see below; Galán 1995, 101–35, esp. 128–32 for review of scholarship and discussion). The expression *wpt t3*, the “brow/forehead,” was also often used for the southern limit, while the northern limit could be called *phww (stty)*, the “rear/end (of Syria).” The location of these borders, understandably, is not defined; they are just somewhere beyond the “God’s Lands.” The *shnwt*, the (four) “posts” of the sky, where imagined to be located at the limits of the world, and could be metaphorically used to indicate its very limits. As implied by an inscription of Hatshepsut (see below), beyond them is *kkw*, “darkness,” a darkness that is more matter for theological speculation than geographical and ideological concern (these mythical parts of the cosmos are discussed in Allen 2003.).

It has to be noted that this narrative was an ideological construct, rather than an accurate representation of the actual contemporary Egyptian geographical knowledge. We cannot exclude that already in the Middle Kingdom, if not even earlier, Egyptians had some awareness or suspicion of the existence of territories located beyond this ideological frame, especially in the north.<sup>31</sup>

29 The best example is in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Khui at Qubbet el-Hawa (west bank of Aswan), where the names of Byblos and Punt are graphically associated and written as alternates within a single line (*Urk.* I 140:17; Newberry 1938; Diego Espinel 2004; Baines 2013, 251–52).

30 See for instance Marcolin 2010 and Allen 2008 for recent discoveries of respectively Old and Middle Kingdom biographical texts in which Byblos enjoys a prominent position.

31 One can mention here also the allusion in the *Tale of Sinuhe* (B 94–95) to Egyptian messengers meeting the protagonist during his exile, in Northern Canaan or Syria.

These lands, however, were probably just geographically and geopolitically too far to require acknowledgement and integration into the dominant cosmographic narrative.

This ideological cosmography seems to have underlain multiple aspects of the Egyptian elite culture, as appears, for instance, from the fact that this framework can be easily perceived also in the fictionalised geographical world of Middle Kingdom literature. There, Egypt, or better the royal residence, is the undisputed centre of the world (Loprieno 2001, esp. 64–74), while highly fictionalised foreign lands characterised by generally positive features lie at its most distant extremes and constitute the limits of the narrative itself. For instance, the mythical island full of every good thing reached by the shipwrecked sailor, or the prosperous land where the good Amunenshi welcomes Sinuhe are perfect examples of such fictionalised and positively connoted lands at the end of the narrative framework.<sup>32</sup>

A second ideological framework that has to be taken into account is the royal duty of *swšḥ t3š(w)*, “extending the border(s)” of Egypt (Galán 1995, 101–35, esp. 101–3). This concept is attested already in sources from the Middle Kingdom, and was an ideologically crucial task for the king in its royal function (Blumenthal 1970, 187–88). In a hymn from Kahun, for instance, Senuseret III is said to be the “protector of the land, who extends his/its frontiers” (Pap. UCL 32157 = Pap. Lahun LV.1, col. 2; Griffith 1898, pl. 1). The same idea appears in Sinuhe: “He (i.e., the king) is one who extends the frontiers” (Sinuhe B 71: Koch 1990, 38).

In Tutankhamun’s Restoration Stele, instead, the concept is expressed in an antithetic way: “The gods ignored this land, (so that) if troops were sent to Djahy to extend the frontiers of Egypt, no success at all would come about for them” (*Urk.* IV 2027:12–14). From Tutankhamun’s perspective, his predecessors betrayed the gods and failed in their duties, and therefore the gods prevented them from extending Egypt’s borders (Liverani 2001, 46).

Until the New Kingdom, these two conceptions, these two ideological frameworks, seem to have been relatively distinct and independent. In the Eighteenth Dynasty, however, they became combined into a new narrative that set a new overreaching goal for the king: “extending the borders up to the limits of the world.”<sup>33</sup>

32 See Loprieno 2001, esp. 64–74, for a related discussion on geography in Middle Kingdom literature touching on many of these elements, although he does not spell out the ideological conception of foreign lands being proposed in this book. Note that a very similar pattern emerges also in Egyptian conceptions of time and of the past in particular – for a discussion see Kilani 2016, 77.

33 Where “world” is, obviously, the ideologically defined world implied by such narratives.

The first king known to have claimed such a deed is Thutmose I, after having marched as far upstream as Kurgus and as far north as the Euphrates. His conquest of the “world” was celebrated in commemorative inscriptions carved in both places (Liverani 2001, 35–36). The one at Kurgus still exists, and it describes Thutmose III as someone “who goes beyond (lit. brings in) the limits of the land upon his area, who treads its two limits (*pḥwy*) with his successful khepesh” (*Urk.* IV 85:7–8), while “his southern frontier is as far as the *Khentyw* of this land, the northern one as far as that inverted river (i.e., the Euphrates or the Orontes)” (*Urk.* IV 85:13–4).

Hatshepsut took up the same ideological challenge, but she chose a different approach. Rather than organizing far-flung military campaigns, she commissioned an expedition to Punt, a region that enjoyed a special place in the Egyptian imaginary as a God’s Land located at the limits of the world. Her expedition was not just a commercial venture: it was a divinely ordained mission aiming at extending her authority to the limits of the world, as we read in an inscription in her temple at Deir El-Bahri “They (the gods) will set your frontier as far as the breadth of the sky, as far as the limits of total darkness” (*Urk.* IV 248:16–17; Naville 1895, 14, pl. 57; Galán 1995, 130; Creasman 2014, esp. 400–402; Taterka 2016). Her mission was successful, and this exploit enabled her to claim on her later obelisks that “he (Amun) made my frontier as far as the limits of heaven, so that what the sun-disc encircles labours for me” (*Urk.* IV 368:11–12) and that “my southern frontier is as far as the shores of Punt, [the ... being in my f]ist; the eastern frontier is as far as the limits of Asia, the Mentyw of Asia being in my fist” (*Urk.* IV 372:5–8).

Then it was the turn of Thutmose III. To judge from his claims and actions (e.g., in the Annals, *Urk.* IV 647:12–14 and elsewhere), he was very aware that a good Pharaoh was expected to extend the borders of Egypt and was clearly determined to equal, and even surpass, his predecessors. Like Thutmose I, he marched north to the Euphrates and as far south as Kurgus, and in both places he left an inscription besides that of his predecessor, as recorded in the Annals: “He set up another (stele) besides the stele of his father”<sup>34</sup> (*Urk.* IV 697:5), and “he set up his stele in Naharin, extending the frontiers of Egypt” (*Urk.* IV 698:15–699:1). The Kurgus inscription still exists today (Davies 2003). Moreover, he organised an expedition to the God’s Land of Byblos (§5.2.1, §5.2.3), which is a perfect ideological counterpart to Hatshepsut’s expedition to Punt (see §5.2.5.3).

In the case of Thutmose III’s expedition, no royal record comparable to Hatshepsut’s account has been found. Nevertheless, as discussed above

34 Here “father” clearly refers to his grandfather Thutmose I.

(§5.2.5.3), remarkable and hardly accidental similarities between the two ventures can be recognised on the basis of the available sources. Both expeditions are said to have been organised in the name of Amun, and local forms of Hathor appear as receivers of offerings, and therefore as economic intermediaries, in both Punt and Byblos. Moreover, Eichler (1998, 223–28) observes that Sennefri's description of Thutmose III's expedition is structurally similar to Hatshepsut's account, and has some of the characteristics of a *Königsnovelle*. Royal literary compositions about the expedition to Byblos may have thus been circulating in Thutmose III's court. Thutmose III's "botanical garden" is also worthy of mention: this room of the Temple of Karnak, whose lowest register is decorated with various strange plants and various fine blooms which are in God's Land, br[ought to] His Majesty when His Majesty journeyed to Upper Retenu (1990, 41–42) clearly parallels the parade of exotic plants and animals depicted in Hatshepsut's Deir El-Bahri Temple and the real trees from Punt planted at its entrance.

As with Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt, that of Thutmose III to Byblos was not only an economic venture, but it was also a religious and ideological mission aiming to symbolically extend the king's authority as far as the God's Land and the limits of the world. Like his predecessors, Thutmose III also felt entitled to claim to be one "who reaches the limits of the foreign lands that had attacked him" (*Urk.* IV 1229:5), while "his southern boundary stretches to the Horn of the Earth, south of this land, and his northern one to the Marshes of Asia and the supports of heaven" (*Urk.* IV 1230:17–18). Because of these deeds, Thutmose III could thus affirm: "What the sun-disc encircles is in my fist" (*Urk.* IV 1234:4).

However, Thutmose III's accomplishments, especially those in the north, were different from those of his predecessors. Thutmose I reached the northern Levant, but he did not annex those regions to the Egyptian realm. Similarly, Hatshepsut's expedition did reach Punt, but she never had any actual authority over it. As observed by Liverani (2001, 25), real conquest or annexation were not indispensable: in order to claim control over remote regions, and therefore over the world as a whole, it was enough to show or claim that the king and his armies could reach them if he wished to do so. Moreover, the lack of effective Egyptian control may have allowed these places to maintain their semi-mythical aura within the Egyptian imaginary: the fact of being the farthest lands reached by the king may have been ideologically reinterpreted as a sign that those were actually the farthest lands that one could reach in general, thus perpetuating the idea of them being indeed close to the limits of the world.

Thutmose III, however, not only reached the northern Levant, but he also conquered much of it and annexed it to his growing empire, truly extending

the *tšš(w)* of Egypt up to the God's Land of Byblos and beyond. And what he found there were not the "limits of the world" of the traditional cosmographic narrative, but other territories and other powerful states. These newly attained polities, although certainly not completely unknown, were now a concrete, close reality that had to be acknowledged and could no longer be relegated at (or beyond) the limits of the main narrative. In consequence, this new geographical reality became increasingly distanced from the traditional narrative described above. The result of these events was, I would argue, a paradigm shift.

The increasing disparity between ideal geographical narratives and actual geographical knowledge in a period of expansion and exploration is a phenomenon attested in different societies and historical periods, and it is not unique to Thutmose III's Egypt. Usually, two strategies have been adopted to deal with the resulting contrasts and paradoxes. The first is to readjust the ideological framework around the new geographical knowledge, either by extending its limits beyond the new reality or by accommodating the new entities within it.<sup>35</sup> The second possibility is to abandon the old paradigm and replace it with a new cosmographic narrative, or with a more pragmatic conception of geography as a whole.<sup>36</sup>

Egyptians seem to have adopted both strategies, at least at first. In the wake of Thutmose III's conquests in the northern Levant, Egypt established diplomatic contacts with imperial powers including the Hittite and Mitannian empires, as well as Babylonia. Egypt certainly had had contacts with and some knowledge of the northern regions in earlier periods. Not until Thutmose III, however, did these distant territories and their inhabitants become real neighbours that belonged to an ordinary reality that had to be acknowledged

35 A good example of such a shift can be observed in pre-Hellenistic Greece, when the archaic idea of a circular (or shield-like) world, with Delphi at the centre of an island earth encircled by the River Ocean, started to be replaced with more elaborate and realistic geographical concepts (Romm 1992, 12–15). It has been suggested that this change occurred around the fifth century BCE and was, at least in part, influenced by the geographical knowledge acquired through the colonial expansion in the western Mediterranean and, to a lesser degree, the contacts with the Persian Empire. Traces of this cosmographic debate and shift can be seen for instance in Herodotus, who questioned and dismissed the existence of the River Ocean, thus dismissing the whole old paradigm (Romm 1992, 12–15, 32–36, but see 41–44 for the continuation of the debate in the following centuries).

36 See for instance the European concept of "India(s)" before and after Columbus, the myth of Eldorado, always located a little farther beyond the territories explored by the Europeans, and the medieval legend of Prester John's kingdom, a mythical Christian kingdom initially located somewhere beyond Muslim lands, and later assumed to be in various other more specific regions such as Central Asia, Russia, India, and Ethiopia, partially following the evolution of European geographical knowledge (Grousset 1970, 191; Beckingham and Hamilton 1996; Brooks 2014).



and engaged with (Liverani 2001, 200–202; Liverani 2002; Zaccagnini 2002; see Kilani 2016b, 83). The existence of these political entities, or more specifically the need to acknowledge their presence – since the Egyptians probably had already known of their existence for a while – undermined Egypt's centrality and political uniqueness within the old geographical narrative.

This new geographical reality did not pass unnoticed in Egypt, and from the end of the reign of Thutmose III the Pharaohs engaged with the international scene in ways that imply the acknowledgment of a different, polycentric, geographical paradigm. This change appears most clearly in the Egyptian involvement in the diplomatic life of the Near East, as suggested by the stipulation of international treaties<sup>37</sup> and by the implicit recognition of the Near Eastern hierarchical system in the diplomatic correspondence of the Amarna letters (e.g., Liverani 2002). It is likely that some sort of international diplomatic interactions did exist also in earlier periods.<sup>38</sup> The evidence from the New Kingdom, however, shows a complex system that is ideologically incompatible with the old cosmographic narrative.

It is thus reasonable to assume that on the economic, administrative, political, and diplomatic levels, Egyptians were pragmatically aware of the limits of their traditional Egyptocentric paradigm; having set it aside in their practical administrative reality – if it had ever been part of it in the first place, they integrated themselves into a more polycentric macro-regional framework. Although Thutmose III's campaigns could have been a catalyst, this shift was not sudden and immediate but gradual. The Egyptians certainly knew of these territories, their inhabitants and their polities before Thutmose III, but it is only after his conquests that they became real, actual neighbours. They were not a vague and unimportant feature of a distant land anymore, but became an ordinary reality that had to be acknowledged and dealt with.

The older cosmography, however, seems to have survived in the royal display and narratives, but it was adapted to the new geopolitical knowledge and reality. Thus, in royal and official monuments, these new neighbouring powers ended up being depicted as the traditional, inherently weak, dangerous, and chaotic foreigners encircling Egypt, whether they were actually enemies or allies.<sup>39</sup>

37 Such as, for instance, those with new neighbours like Mitanni or Hatti, attested for the first time during the reign of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II (Singer 2004).

38 As could be implied, for instance, by the special regulations for Nubian messengers stated in Senuseret III's Semna stele of year 8 (4–5; see Obsomer 1989, 181–83).

39 This Egyptian rhetoric, and its contrast with the actual geopolitical reality, must have been quite obvious and possibly even somehow farcical, because during the reign of Ramses II it even led to occasional complaints by Hittite allies (Brand 2007, 23).

Whether the Egyptians abandoned their paradigm entirely or adapted it to their new geopolitical knowledge, Byblos's position within the Egyptian geographical imaginary was surely affected, and so were, overall, the relations and interactions between the city and Egypt (Kilani 2016b, 84–85). Within the old cosmographic framework, Byblos enjoyed the privileged status of a “God's Land” at the edge of the acknowledged world, a status that played a role in the development of its interactions with Egypt, bringing prestige as well as political and economic advantages. In particular, until the time of Thutmose III, Byblos was depicted as a distant, exotic, but friendly city, renowned for its association with Hathor and for its precious and rare products. However, and in contrast with Punt, which maintained its mythical connotations also in later periods, perhaps in part because it was never conquered, Byblos's ideological status must have changed, possibly radically, after Thutmose III's conquests: the city, now a vassal within the Egyptian realm, could no longer play the role of a land of marvels at the edge of the world and lost its aura of exoticism and remoteness.

The striking contrast between the emphasis put on expeditions to Byblos in sources before and until the reign of Thutmose III, and the complete absence of any later comparable royal or non-royal account suggests that, after the reign of this king, reaching the city was not perceived as an exceptional deed any longer. Moreover, although the city probably continued to be a source for specific goods, it was no longer the only or the main one: the Egyptian commercial network in the Levant had expanded greatly, and Byblos was now one of many coastal polities – some located even farther north – that were controlled by Egypt, or were in regular contact with it.

As seen above, a change can perhaps be observed also in the Egyptian perception of the Lady of Byblos, who gradually passed from being a form of Hathor to being identified with Isis in the early first millennium BCE. In view of Hathor's association with the “God's Land,” this change is remarkable as it attests a modification of the mythological connections of the city within the Egyptian imaginary.

The letters of Rib-Hadda, the king of Byblos during the Amarna period, are also relevant here. As discussed above (§5.4.1, especially §5.4.2 and §5.4.3), their numerous references to the city's goddess and to a past of friendship and reciprocal support, as well as their many complaints about current (real or perceived) neglect by the pharaohs, show that Rib-Hadda was aware of the past prestige of Byblos and that he clearly realised that something had changed. While much in Rib-Hadda's letters is rhetorical, multiple details show that he had some awareness of the past history of his city and, to judge by his exasperation, did not seem to understand all the causes of what was happening.

The final outcome of this process can perhaps be seen in the *Tale of Wenamun*. The Byblos depicted in the text is very different from that of the time of Thutmose III and earlier. Although the city is presented as a hub for trade in timber, neither Hathor nor a local “Lady of Byblos” is mentioned, and no Egyptian offering is presented to any temple. The Byblian king is aware of and acknowledges the city’s long tradition of interactions with Egypt, but he does not seem to attach any special prestige to it (2.19–22; Schipper 2005, 72–73). Moreover, although Byblos is the destination of Wenamun’s expedition, it is not the only Levantine scene of the narrative, nor the final leg of his odyssey or the limit of the tale’s world: the protagonist’s misadventures continue with his being wrecked on Cyprus. Byblos is no longer a “God’s Land” at the edge of the world; if anything, to judge from the few surviving lines of the Cyprus episode (2.74–83; Schipper 2005, 97–101), it is the island that may have presented features of an exotic and mysterious land. Unfortunately, however, this passage is incomplete and too short to draw any conclusion from it.

Byblos seems to have enjoyed short periods of revival after the Eighteenth Dynasty, probably connected with some of the other economic or strategic factors described in this book (§6.2, §6.3, §6.4). However, its status within the Egyptian geographical imaginary seems to have radically changed: its ancient prestige and its favoured position as a land at the edge of the world were definitely gone.

## 6 Byblos in the Late Bronze Age

The sources presented in the first part of this book and further discussed in the previous paragraphs provide precious information about specific events that shaped the history of the city, as well as its economy, society, and frames of interactions, and show that Byblos was well integrated into the economic and geopolitical system of the eastern Mediterranean. In the remaining part of this book, this evidence will be contextualised within the wider regional geopolitical landscape in order to obtain a general, coherent picture of the historical development of the city during the Late Bronze Age.

### 6.1 *Thutmose III’s Reign*

The Egyptian return to the Levantine scene and the establishment of Thutmose III’s empire were without doubt the main geopolitical events of this period. Interest in the Levant had been renewed at the beginning of the dynasty, which was characterised by the wars against the Hyksos and by the re-emergence of Egypt as a unified state. New technology and new strategy, connected in

particular with the war chariot, played a crucial role in these developments (Díaz Hernández 2014).

After having reunified the country, the first kings of the dynasty began campaigning in the Levant (Vandersleyen 1971; Redford 1979a; 1979; Bradbury 1985; Hoffmeier 2004; Spalinger 2005, 46–69; Ahrens 2015). Although early Eighteenth Dynasty kings may have visited Byblos (see especially Redford 1979a, 271–75), no evidence of such visits was found in the city, and no mention of the city is attested in the surviving contemporary Egyptian sources. Byblos reappears in the records only under Thutmose III, whose campaigns mark a turning point in the Egyptian policies in the region (e.g., Weinstein 1981, 7–15; Redford 1990, 33–34; Knapp 1992, 92; Morris 2005, 27–67, 115–80, esp. 115–16; Spalinger 2005, 70–139). In contrast with the military activities of his predecessors, those of Thutmose III were not extemporaneous demonstrations of power, or raiding expeditions with few or no geopolitical consequences: they were regular and progressive ventures that resulted in the establishment of a lasting Egyptian military presence and political dominance, that is, of an empire, over the whole coastal region.

It was probably a combination of politico-strategic, economic, and ideological factors originating within Egypt that stimulated this new phase of expansion. To campaign in the Levant, and even more to control it, were very lucrative activities. First looting, and later levying tribute and taxes, combined with the control of the trade routes crossing the region, were certainly important sources of income for the Egyptian state (e.g., Ahituv 1978; Na'aman 1981; Redford 1990, 40–63; Liverani 2001, 52–56, 141–88; Hoffmeier 2004, 133–37; Spalinger 2005, 111–36). Ideological factors also played a role. Besides the general legitimation deriving from conquests, these kings seem to have sought authority in the idea of extending the borders of Egypt, ideally to the end of the world (Kilani 2016b, with references – see also §6.5.0.2 above).

The whole region was affected by these events. As discussed earlier (§5.2.5.1), the rulers of Byblos and those of other cities of the northern Levantine coast may have peacefully – if not willingly – submitted themselves to the Egyptian domination, possibly by treaty. By doing so, these rulers may have avoided the looting of their cities, they may have retained their positions and status, and they may have even obtained some advantages and rewards in return for their goodwill and allegiance.

The Egyptian military presence could have increased the regional prestige and political leverage of Byblos (§5.2.1 §5.2.5.1). Moreover, friendly relations with the Egyptians may have resulted in a concrete Egyptian military support in defeating the city's local adversaries, which may have resulted in a territorial

expansion northwards and may have thus resulted in political and economic gains (§5.2.5.1).

However, belonging to the Egyptian empire also had negative consequences for the city. As appears from the Annals of Thutmose III (§5.2.1; §5.2.5.1), the Lebanese harbours (*mnjw*t, e.g., *Urk.* IV 700:6–9; see §5.2.1), which presumably included Byblos, were expected to pay yearly *b3k*-contributions to the Pharaoh (Redford 1990, 56–60). In addition, as various scholars have argued, during the Eighteenth Dynasty the Levantine vassals were probably expected to supply strategic and economic support to the Egyptian armies.

The reign of Thutmose III is also characterised by a royal expedition to fetch wood for the flagpoles and the sacred bark of the Temple of Karnak. The expedition was sent to Byblos around years 33–34 (§5.2.3) and was led by Sennefri, who left an account of it in his tomb. The mission had strong religious and ideological motivations, being a way for the Pharaoh to show his devotion to Amun and, possibly, to claim his control over lands traditionally considered as remote and exotic (§6.5.0.2).

Such expeditions were also major economic ventures for both Egypt and Byblos. The Egyptians were obviously looking for wood, which was felled and transported in large quantities, and were probably interested also in other valued goods, such as oils, resins, and essences – all products for the Egyptian palace, temples, and elites (§6.3.0.1). Byblos could provide all of these goods, and with its possible territorial expansion northwards, it may have obtained access to additional resources (such as different types of trees – see §5.2.5.1), thus becoming an even more attractive trading partner.

Byblos profited from these Egyptian expeditions as well, as offerings to the temples of the city were presented by the Egyptians as part of these trades (§5.2.5.1; §5.2.5.2; §6.3.0.2; §6.5.0.1). We do not know precisely what these “offerings” consisted of, although they must have been significant and valuable, and could have included the scarabs of Thutmose III found in the Obelisk Temple (§4.4.6). While in the Egyptian sources only the Lady of Byblos appears as the beneficiary of these contributions, Egyptian items are also archaeologically attested in other temples of the city (§4.6 §6.4). This suggests that either the Egyptians were dedicating offerings in other temples as well, or that the offerings made to the Temple of the Lady were redistributed within the city and could also reach other temples. In both cases, it is clear that the temple(s) of Byblos played an important role in the economic interactions of the city with Egypt.

The Egyptian interests in the Temple of the Lady were not only economic, but also genuinely religious. Thutmose III promoted architectural works there, as attested by the inscription of Minmose (§5.2.2) and by two blocks found



there out of context (§3.5, 1–2). The details of these works are not known. The Temple of the Lady may have also played a role in the Egyptian administration of the region. Temples in the Levant often had administrative and economic functions (§5.2.5.2; Singer 1988, 4–5; Morris 2005, 120–21), and this is likely to have been the case in Byblos as well. In general, a possible role of Byblos in the Egyptian regional administration is suggested by the statue of Djehuty, an officer of Thutmose III, who had administrative duties in the region and may have been based in the city, as he dedicated there a statue to the Lady (§3.5, 5).

In sum, many major events affected Byblos in these years, and overall this seems to have been a positive period for the city.

## 6.2 *From Thutmose III to the Amarna Period*

Very little evidence is available for the time between the death of Thutmose III and the Amarna period. Some royal expeditions to the Lebanese coast took place in those years (Bardinet 2008, 242–48). It is likely that Byblos played some role in them, but its name is not attested in the sources. The presence in Byblos of scarabs of this period suggests that contacts with Egypt continued (§3.3; §4.4.6; see also §B). Many of these scarabs were found in the sacred area of the city, possibly attesting that the temples were still involved in the exchanges with Egypt.

The Egyptian ideological perception of Byblos may have started to change in this period. By contrast, the geopolitical panorama attested in the Amarna letters suggests that the sphere of influence of the city remained stable and still extended northwards towards Ullassa as it had done since Thutmose III's conquests.

Byblos's strategic value, however, may have decreased, as the establishment of diplomatic treaties with Mitanni around the end of the reign of Thutmose III inaugurated a period of relative peace in the region. Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV seem to have conducted only few occasional campaigns in the Levant, mainly in response to local revolts (Der Manuelian 1987, 47–55; Bryce 1998, 132–57, 236; Kühne 1999, 217; Bryan 2000a, 77–79; Freu 2003, 72–73). Moreover, after Thutmose III's conquests in Amurru, the border of the empire in the northern Levant had moved farther north, away from Byblos.

As suggested by the Amarna letters, it is probably in this period that Sumur became the centre of the Egyptian administration in the area, possibly replacing Byblos in this function (§5.2.5.1; §5.4.5). This reorganization of the Egyptian imperial administration in the region must have been the result of precise considerations, as Sumur was located in a very strategic position: located north of Byblos and south of Ugarit, close to the northern border of the empire,

Sumur controlled the coast as well as the Akkar plain and the Eleutheros/Nahr El-Kabir valley, which give access to the area of Qadesh and inner Syria.

### 6.3 *The Amarna Period*

The Amarna period appears to have been a difficult time for Byblos. Ideological changes within Egypt, combined with the long peace that followed the treaty with Mitanni at the time of Amenhotep II may have modified the Egyptian interests in the northern Levant. Egypt now focused less on Byblos than it had in the past.

This new geopolitical landscape provided room for new leaders eager to challenge the micro-regional status quo. It is in this context that a new political entity, Amurru, emerged just north of Byblos. Amurru's expansion had deep and negative consequences for Byblos. The city lost most of its northern possessions, and this military defeat certainly affected the city's economic and political life. The sources suggest that within a few years Byblos passed from being a leading regional polity, with a territory including several cities and a number of allies or vassals, to being a small kingdom controlling only the city itself and a limited area around it. Obviously, the loss of the northern coast and the drastic reduction of its political influence meant that the resources of these areas were no longer in its control (§5.4.6).

These were not the city's only problems. As discussed above, the coasts to the north and to the south became increasingly hostile to Byblos, at least according to Rib-Hadda's letters (§5.4.5; §5.4.6). The rise of Amurru was not only territorial but also political. Alongside their conquests, its leaders developed a network of alliances across Lebanon and the northern Levant that probably extended as far south as Sidon and Tyre (*EA* 101:20–35, 114:12–15; Vita 2001–2002, 428–29). These cities grew increasingly opposed or even hostile to Byblos; Amurru thus not only attacked Byblos directly but also succeeded in isolating it politically and economically.

The Amarna letters suggest that this hostile environment ended up destabilising Byblos internally. Factions challenging Rib-Hadda's rule started to emerge within the city. For some time he was able to contain them, but he was finally overthrown and forced into exile, where he died. We do not know exactly what happened to Byblos at that point. It is possible that the new rulers of the city struck some agreement with Amurru, perhaps finally siding with Aziru (§5.4.6). The city, however, was not annexed to Amurru, or if it was it soon regained its independence: a king of Byblos, clearly distinct from the king of Amurru, is attested some decades later in a letter found in Ugarit (see §5.6.5, RS 18.134). No evidence suggests that Byblos, unlike Amurru, passed to the

Hittite side or made a treaty with them. It is thus likely that the city remained, at least formally, within the Egyptian orbit.

The difficulties of Byblos were probably not only the result of Amurru's expansion. The suggested lack of interest from Egypt for the region may have hit Byblos more severely than other cities. Since its relations with Egypt were freighted with ideological and religious factors (6.5), it is likely that the largely religious Amarna revolution had a negative effect on them. Nothing definite is known about Akhenaton's attitude towards the Lady of Byblos or towards foreign deities in general, but the goddess could not have any prominent role in the Atonist ideology, and it is most unlikely that the reformist Amarna court paid any respect (or made any offering) to Byblos as seat of the Lady. Within the late Eighteenth Dynasty ideological context, and even more within the Amarna universalist vision of the world, Byblos had no special significance.

The events of the Amarna period, therefore, must have affected Byblos negatively in political and economic terms, in its international relations and exchanges, and in its territorial integrity. The role of the city and its influence on the micro-regional level seem to have been greatly diminished, and the whole period must have been one of hardship and decline.

#### 6.4 *Early Nineteenth Dynasty*

A gap in the evidence about Byblos exists in correspondence to the very late Eighteenth Dynasty and early Nineteenth Dynasty. The only written attestation that we have comes from a bowl attributed to the reign of Horemheb, which however is probably a fake (Yoyotte 1981, 44, with references; see §5.5). While it is impossible to reconstruct the development of Byblos in detail, a few trends can be suggested by comparing the geopolitical situation of the city in the previous and following periods.

It is likely that Byblos was involved in the Egyptian attempts to conquer back the territories of Amurru, after its secession at the end of the Amarna period. Campaigns with this aim may have taken place under Horemheb (Murnane 1990, 30; Ahrens 2014) and are attested under Seti I (Murnane 1990; see below §6.6.5). A stele by the latter found in Tyre is likely related to these military activities.<sup>40</sup> Egyptian forces may have passed through Byblos in these occasions, when they marched northwards against the Hittites.

40 *KRI* I 117; top and bottom portions missing. No date is preserved; only the name of the Pharaoh and the initial fragments of encomium survive. See Brand 2000, with references. On Tyre, see also below.

Although Seti I's campaigns were more successful than those of his direct predecessors, his conquests were probably short-lived, and Ramses II had to campaign again in the area at the beginning of his reign in order to assert his control there (Murnane 1990, 39–45, 52–65; Singer 1991, 164–65; Cavillier 2002a). Nothing suggests that in this period Byblos recovered any of the territories lost to Amurru during the Amarna Age.

By contrast, it is likely that duties were imposed on the cities of the region in the wake of these Egyptian military activities. For instance, we know from his reliefs in Karnak that Seti I required the rulers of Lebanon, presumably including Byblos, to provide wood during one of his campaigns (*KRI* I 13.8; Epigraphic Survey 1986, 28–34, esp. 33, pl. 10; Murnane 1990, 43; Obsomer 2012, 37). At the same time, however, the renewed Egyptian interest in the area and Byblos's strategic position as the last major coastal city before the Hittite border may have brought some new commercial opportunity and some occasional benefit.

### 6.5 *Ramses II*

The war with the Hittites was a dominant element in Ramses II's early years. Like his predecessors, the young king aimed at reconquering the territories of Amurru and inland Syria (Murnane 1990; Cavillier 2002a). First, during the early years of his reign, Ramses II established Egyptian control on the coast and in the western part of Amurru. Then he tried a direct attack on Qadesh, marching through the Beqa'a Valley while supporting troops approached from the coast. This strategy did not work as expected, and the troops from the coast barely managed to save the king's life during the ensuing battle. In the aftermath of this confrontation, Ramses II retreated southwards, definitively losing the whole of Amurru (Singer 2002, 198–99).

Byblos is not mentioned in the sources relating to these Egyptian military endeavours. Some elements of its situation in this period can nonetheless be extrapolated by combining the scarce evidence presented above with the general geopolitical context of the time (§3.5; §4.5; §5.6). Byblos was likely involved in Ramses II's military operations, at least during his first campaigns. The steles of the Nahr El-Kalb (§4.9), the one found in the city itself (§3.5), two other fragments of steles found in Tyre (*KRI* II 40; Wimmer 2002, 2, 6, 8, with references) and another rock inscription from Adhlun (*KRI* II 223; Wimmer 2002, 8–9 and *passim*, with references; Obsomer 2012, 123), attest to the passage of Ramses II's armies on the Lebanese coast during these campaigns. The return of a strong Egyptian authority in the area probably also meant that taxes, tributes, or other services were expected. Morris, however, argues that Horemheb introduced a series of reforms to ease the economic burden of the Egyptian expeditions on the local authorities, thus suggesting that during the

Nineteenth Dynasty the Egyptian functionaries could rely at least in part on a permanent, self-sufficient Egyptian infrastructure set up in place to support their needs, rather than just on resources and facilities co-opted from local vassals (Morris 2005, 17–20 and *passim*). If this is correct, then the burden of the Egyptian domination was probably less heavy to bear than in previous periods.

The existence in Tyre of steles of Seti I (see above) and Ramses II demonstrates some Egyptian presence there. Tyre at the time offered some strategic advantages over Byblos. As an island, the city was a perfect stronghold, and it was located at the southern limit of the Lebanese coast and near the mouth of the Litani river, and thus near one of the main accesses to the southern Beqa'a (Murnane 1990, 51–65; Cavillier 2002b; Cavillier 2002a).

By contrast, the strategic position of Byblos was not very strong. Although the city was on the coastal road, it had no direct access to the Syrian interior. Moreover, its general strategic value may have also changed from previous periods. During the early Eighteenth Dynasty Byblos must have appeared as an ideal place to rely on for northern military operations, not least because of its long tradition of friendly relations with Egypt. Under Thutmose III the Egyptians were intruders in the area and had not consolidated their presence there yet. Having a dependable ally in a freshly conquered and potentially hostile territory could have been a crucial strategic factor for the Egyptians at the time. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, however, much of the Lebanese coast had already been under direct Egyptian domination for nearly two centuries. The territory was well known, and the Egyptian armies could rely on a well-established infrastructure to control it (Morris 2005, 27–67; 115–80; 217–310; 343–611). Although Byblos was probably still a good ally, the Egyptians could now rely on strategically more convenient options for developing and managing their imperial infrastructure in the area. Tyre was possibly one of them.

The collapse of Mitanni and the re-emergence of the Hittites could have also changed the geography of power in the region, inducing or enabling the Egyptians to try new ways to approach Syria. In particular, the focuses of power of the Mitannian and Hittite empires were in different regions, the former being to the north-east of Lebanon and the latter further north. It is thus possible that the Beqa'a Valley, which is to the east of Mount Lebanon and very close to Mitannian territory but quite distant from the core of the Hittite Empire, was a much safer route during the Nineteenth Dynasty than it was at the time of Thutmose III.

Ethnicity, or perhaps better cultural identity, may also have been at play. Whereas the Hittites were culturally foreign to both the Beqa'a and the Lebanese coast, the situation was different for Mitanni. As appears from the Amarna



correspondence, the local rulers of the coast used names, and probably were, of clear West-Semitic origin, while those east of Mount Lebanon tended to bear Hurrian or Indo-Aryan names and therefore may have perceived themselves as ethnically or culturally closer to the state of Mitanni. More in particular, all the identifiable names of city rulers on the Lebanese coast in the Amarna letters are interpreted as clearly West-Semitic: Aduna of Irgata, 'Abdi-Ashirta and Aziru of Amurru, Rib-Hadda of Byblos, Yapah-Hadda of Beirut, Zimredda of Sidon, Abi-Milku of Tyre.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, almost all the attested names of rulers in the Beqa'a Valley and in the regions east of Mount Lebanon have been interpreted as non-West-Semitic: Akizzi of Qatna, Aitakama of Qadesh, Tewatti of Lapana, Arashsha of Kumidi, Biryawaza of Damascus.<sup>42</sup> Two other names may or may not be West-Semitic: Ildayyi of Hasi and Bieri of Hashabu.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, the only name east of Mount Lebanon that can be safely identified as West-Semitic is 'Abdi-Risha of Enishasi (Hess 1993, 16–17).

This ethno-cultural partition of the northern Levant could have influenced Thutmose III's approach to the region: the rulers of the West-Semitic coastal cities could have seen the Egyptians as offering an opportunity to take a stand against their neighbours, who may have identified themselves with a different, non-West-Semitic ethno-cultural identity. Moreover, the rulers of the Beqa'a, who appear to have identified themselves with the Hurrian and Indo-Aryan ethno-cultural traditions, could have been more integrated into the Mitannian sphere of influence and therefore may have displayed greater hostility towards the Egyptian attempts to control the area. In consequence, Thutmose III could have favoured a safer coastal approach to northern Syria in some of his campaigns, rather than following a more direct but also more exposed route through the Beqa'a.

During the Nineteenth Dynasty, however, neither the coast nor the Beqa'a shared ethnic or cultural links with the Hittites. Therefore, the contemporary rulers of the Beqa'a may have been more supportive to the Egyptian troops,

41 Respectively: Hess 1993, 22; 9 and 46; 134; 85; 170; 18–19.

42 Respectively: Hess 1993, 28; Hess 1993, 28; Hess 1993, 158; Hess 1993, 37; Hess 1993, 61. Hess identifies Akizzi and Aitakama as Hurrian name. He identifies also Arashsha as Hurrian, although he thinks it could be a family name and he suggests the form should be read *A-ra-wa-na*, instead of *A-ra-aš-ša*. Biryawaza is likely Indo-Aryan, according to Hess, while he identifies Tewatti as Indo-European, possibly Anatolian, although Indo-Aryan etymologies have also been suggested. He considers a Hurrian etymology is unlikely. In any case, the name is clearly non-West-Semitic.

43 Respectively: Hess 1993, 20; Hess 1993, 57–8.

so that the valley could have offered easier access to Syria than at the time of Thutmose III's wars with Mitanni.

Whether these considerations are valid or not, Tyre was ideally located for a military approach to the north that targeted both the Beqa'a and the coastal road. This strategic position, combined with its remarkable harbours, which may have been better than those of Byblos (Marriner et al. 2008; Carayon et al. 2011, 56–59), could have stimulated the Egyptian interest in the city during the Nineteenth Dynasty, strengthening its regional position and likely making it a stronger contender for Byblos. The introduction of plastered cisterns around the thirteenth century BCE could have also favoured Tyre, enhancing its advantages as an island. As Pap. Anastasi I and the Amarna letters show, the island relied on the coast for water (Katzenstein 1973, 14–15, 29, 52; see also §5.6.1). The plastered cisterns would have increased water stocks, making the city more resilient to attacks and allowing it to develop to an extent that previously would have been unsustainable.

Byblos could nonetheless have retained some strategic value for the Egyptians, especially during Ramses II's earlier campaigns. At that time it was probably the northernmost city in the Egyptian sphere of influence and may have therefore been crucial for the operations in Amurru. The steles of the Nahr El-Kalb attest to the passage of Ramses II's army in the area in at least three of his Syrian campaigns (§4.9), as probably does the stele found in the city itself, even if it could be later in date (§3.5). Byblos may have obtained some territorial gains in the wake of the Egyptian campaigns, but any such conquests would have been lost after the battle of Qadesh and the definitive Egyptian retreat from Amurru (Spalinger 1981, 356–58; Singer 1991, 167–68; Obsomer 2012, 187–89, 194–95).

The Peace Treaty with the Hittites in year 21 of Ramses II inaugurated a new geopolitical phase for the northern Levant. Once again, sources about the effects on Byblos are few. Nevertheless, some features of the city's situation in the following period can be inferred by contextualizing this scattered evidence within the cultural and geopolitical landscape of the time. The conclusion of the treaty sealed the end of the territorial disputes between Egyptians and Hittites in northern Lebanon, and the peace deriving from it created ideal conditions for commerce and economic prosperity (Singer 2002, esp. 199–201). Byblos surely took advantage of this situation. The archaeological evidence indicates that economic exchanges with Egypt continued during the reign of Ramses II, as attested by fragments of stone vessels with his name (§3.5, §4.8.1). While some of these vessels may have been brought to the city in the early years of Ramses II's reign, perhaps even during his Syrian campaigns as gift or

as some form of reward, the form of the name of the Pharaoh on some of the fragments shows that at least some of them must have reached the city later, around the time of or after the Egyptian–Hittite Peace Treaty. The fact that two of these inscribed fragments were found in one of the royal tombs of Byblos together with other uninscribed sherds shows that the royalty profited from these exchanges. More broadly, the presence of new royal tombs dating to this period suggests that the ruling elite was relatively prosperous.

The trading network of Byblos in this period of peace was not limited to Egypt. The fragmentary text from Hattusha presented in §5.6.4 shows that textiles from the city were exported to the Hittite Empire, while tablets from Ugarit document commercial and epistolary relations with the Syrian city, which was then a Hittite vassal (Singer 1999, 627–83; see above §5.6.5). Byblos, however, does not seem to have enjoyed any privileged position in these exchanges. If any, it is Sidon and Tyre that appear, in the Ugarit archives, as the most prominent cities of the southern Lebanese coast (§5.6.5.2). This prominence of Tyre and Sidon anticipates the geopolitical landscape of the Iron Age, when these cities dominated the Phoenician coast (Katzenstein 1973; Elayi 1989; Stieglitz 1990; Stern 1998; Vita 2001–2002; Boyes 2012; see below §6.6.6).

Both archaeological evidence and texts suggest that at the time of Ramses II the Lady of Byblos was still central to the city's interactions with Egypt (see above §6.5.0.1). The goddess was prominent enough to be mentioned as a distinctive feature of the city in Pap. Anastasi I (§5.6.1), while blocks from a chapel bearing the name of Ramses II attest to Egyptian architectural activities in its sacred area (§4.5). The form of the names on the blocks suggests that the chapel was built after year 21 and therefore after the Peace Treaty (§4.5). The stele of Ramses II found possibly in the area of the Temple of the Lady bears similar name forms, although the text itself is said to be dated to year 4 (§3.5). Similar retrospective datings of steles are known from Egypt; an example is Ramses II's "stele of year 8" from Manshiyet El-Sadr (*KRI* II 360–62, Obsomer 2012, 306–7). The chapel and stele show that the Egyptian attention for the city was not only contingent on Ramses II's Syrian campaigns at the beginning of his reign, but continued also in later years, after the stipulation of the Peace Treaty. These Egyptian dedications were probably paralleled by offerings. Some of the fragments of stone vessels bearing the name of Ramses II found by Montet and Dunand (§3.5, §4.8) could have been among them.

Ramses II's reign thus appears as a period of positive, although perhaps limited, opportunities for Byblos. In general, the reigns of Ramses II and his successors seem to have been a favourable time for the whole coast (Singer 2002), although this may have also meant that Byblos had to face growing economic competition.

### 6.6 *The Period after Ramses II*

No written source mentions Byblos in the final decades of the New Kingdom, after the Nineteenth Dynasty. The archaeological evidence is also meagre. The presence of some Twentieth Dynasty scarabs (§3.3, see §B), a fragment of a statue of Ramses III (3.5), as well as some evidence for royal expeditions to the northern Levant (Bardinet 2008, 261–71) may suggest that contacts with Egypt were maintained, but nothing specific can be said about them.

No destruction level that could be associated with the end of the Late Bronze Age was identified in Byblos. The presence in Necropolis K of LH III C Mycenaean pottery, which is usually associated with the so-called Sea Peoples, suggests that the city did interact with these groups, although the nature of these contacts remains unclear (§4.7).

The Egyptian withdrawal from the northern Levant at the end of the New Kingdom can hardly have been positive for the city (Snape 2011, 414–16; Weinstein 2011). Troubles in the north, with the collapse of the Hittite Empire, could have also weakened its commercial network (Bryce 1998, 327–56; 2012, 9–32; Singer 2000; D'Alfonso and Mora 2012, with references). There is no evidence suggesting that with the decline of Amurru and its disappearance around the end of the Late Bronze Age (Singer 1991, 172–79), Byblos seized the opportunity to extend once again its influence northwards. On the contrary, it may be relevant that many of the cities that had belonged to Byblos before the Amarna period and afterwards passed to Amurru (see §5.4.5, §5.4.6) were said, in classical times, to be colonies of Tyre or Sidon, often with traditions setting their foundation during the early Iron Age. Batruna, said to be founded by Ethoba'al of Tyre (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 8.13:2; Feldman 2004), or Tripoli/Ulassa, said to originate from three colonies of Tyre, Sidon, and Arwad (Strabo, *Geography*, 16:2.15; Roller 2014), are particularly relevant examples. This could suggest that Tyre and Sidon, which may have prospered during the Nineteenth Dynasty, may have exploited the turmoil characterizing the end of the Late Bronze Age to extend their influence in the north, filling the power vacuum left by the collapse of Amurru and Ugarit, and by the disappearance of the Hittite Empire. Such a development would fit well with the general picture emerging here, and future historical and archaeological investigations of Amurru may provide additional support to this suggestion.

The statues of Sheshonq I, Osorkon I, and Osorkon II found in the city (§4.3; §6.4) show that Egypt maintained contact with Byblos during the Iron Age. The city however was no longer in the Egyptian sphere of influence, and by the middle of the ninth century BCE it paid tribute to Assyria (Healy 1991, 10). Egyptian royal expeditions were still organised to obtain wood for the bark

of Amun (Bardinet 2008, 271–75), but no detailed account survives and the overall evidence is rather meagre.

The only extensive source from the period is the *Tale of Wenamun*, which is likely a literary composition and not a historically accurate account (Baines 1999; 2009; Schipper 2005; Winand 2011). Nevertheless, even as a tale, this text can still be a crucial source of information about the contemporary perception of such expeditions and about the narratives underlying them. In particular, Wenamun's expedition has more of the character of an ordinary trading mission within the regional network than that of an exceptional royal venture. This at least is what the practical and ordinary obstacles faced by Wenamun suggest, and what Zeker-Ba'al, the Byblian king in the tale, seems to think, especially when he asks for documents supporting Wenamun's claims or when he seems to implicitly compare Wenamun's mission to that of the other ships in his harbour (1.52; 1.58–2.2; see Schipper 2005, 62, 64–65; see also de Spens 1998 for the local legal challenges).

Egypt did maintain some religious connection with the city and its goddess also after the Late Bronze Age, but this relation seems to have changed. In particular, Isis started to be associated with the Lady of Byblos (Hollis 2009), replacing Hathor. As discussed above, this shift may have been influenced by the emergence of new religious trends within Egypt and by changes in the Egyptian perceptions of the city (§6.5.0.2).

In this respect, the prominence of the king of Byblos in the negotiations with the Egyptian envoy and the absence of any mention of the Lady of Byblos are certainly noteworthy features of the *Tale of Wenamun*, as they strongly contrasts with what observed in earlier Egyptian sources (§6.5.0.1). It is naturally possible that the “Lady of Byblos” was implied among the “gods” which Zeker-Ba'al was sacrificing to in 1.38 (Schipper 2005, 56), but it is remarkable that she was not explicitly mentioned by the author of the tale, and that even the deity who interceded by talking to Zeker-Ba'al telling him to meet with Wenamun was a “god,” not a “goddess” (1.38, Schipper 2005, 56).

As mentioned in the introduction of this book, in the Iron Age Byblos appeared as a marginal and unimportant city within the regional geopolitical landscape (Stieglitz 1990; Stern 1998; Vita 2001–2002; Elayi 2009; Boyes 2012; see §1). This new reality was likely a crystallization of developments that started in earlier periods. The end of the New Kingdom was probably the final step in this transition.

## 6.7 Conclusions

The Late Bronze Age appears to have been a particularly dynamic and eventful period for Byblos. Although far from being complete or exhaustive, the



textual and archaeological sources make it possible to identify some features and trends characterising the city, its evolution, and its interactions, as well as some of the factors that influenced them.

The results of this research highlight the fact that the decline characterizing Byblos in the Iron Age was not, or not only, the consequence of events relating to the general collapse of the Late Bronze Age system. The position of Byblos in the region had already begun to be challenged and eroded during the Late Bronze Age, probably as early as the Amarna period, and these events could have started a trend that led to its decline, marginalization, and eclipse in the Iron Age.

The present research exemplifies the relevance and fruitfulness of combining different types of evidence, especially when written sources are few and scattered in time and space. More particularly, since these written sources had various origins, audiences, and functions, they make it possible to look at the city from multiple perspectives, revealing different and at times complementary aspects of its socio-economic structures and interactions. For example, some Egyptian sources highlight the special ideological and religious relation linking the city with Egypt, while the analysis of texts from Ugarit adds information about Byblos's participation in the normal regional network, an aspect that has rarely been considered.

Moreover, if one takes into consideration the archaeological evidence, light can be shed on other aspects of the city, allowing a contextualization of the events and relations mentioned in the texts. In this undertaking, the creation of a database and the use of digital tools have made it possible to recover data from old excavation records and to better visualise the results. The main advantage of using digital tools, however, is the possibility of publishing the raw data online. To share this information online not only allows other scholars to access it and to use it in their own research: it also assures its preservation, something that is particularly relevant for today's Levant.

Byblos, and therefore the present research, however, are only a part of a much larger picture, and it would certainly be valuable to look at my results from larger synchronic and diachronic perspectives. For instance, it may be worth comparing them with the patterns and dynamics characterising previous or following periods, or looking at patterns in the evolution of its contemporary neighbours, in order to understand whether and how the different political entities of the region affected one another. Some of the approaches presented in this book could help in such an undertaking, if applied to other periods, sites, or regional entities. Amurru would be the best candidate. Although the original core territory of this kingdom in the Lebanese mountains is little known archaeologically, various cities and sites related to it, such as Irqata and Sumur,

have been at least in part excavated and explored. Moreover, as in the case of Byblos, a wide range of written sources preserves information about the kingdom during the Late Bronze Age. If all these pieces of evidence were discussed together and combined with what emerged from the present research on Byblos, we could obtain new insights and a better understanding not only of Amurru itself, but also of dynamics and structures in the region as a whole. Cities and sites which are less well attested, such as Sidon or Qadesh, could also be integrated into such a discourse in order to compensate, at least in part, for the lack of direct evidence.

Although gaps will always exist, such an approach may provide clues to fill them and to obtain a more precise general picture. Furthermore, a better understanding of the local realities, and of their synchronic and diachronic connections, would certainly lead to new insights into the dynamics affecting these societies, and therefore to a better understanding of the Late Bronze Age Levant as a whole.

## *Appendices*





## Software

One of my main goals is to make not only my results, but also my data and my methods available to the widest possible audience. I believe that having full access not only to the results of a research, but also to the sources, the methods, and the tools that have been used is crucial: everyone should not only be able to discuss the outcome of my study, but should also have the possibility of picking up and re-elaborating all of my data according to one's specific needs, in order to carry on the research as freely as possible.

These considerations have shaped my decisions regarding the software and methods I have used. In particular, I have decided to work with open source, widely available, and possibly easy to use software. This decision is not only in agreement with my sharing philosophy, but it also has the advantage of allowing everyone to have easy and free access to my data, tools, and techniques. The flexible architectures, the freely available plugins, and the thriving online communities of open source software are very important aspects, in this respect.

Finally, there is the problem of compatibility. Technology evolves very quickly, and it is very difficult to foresee which format will still be available and which one will have disappeared in ten or fifteen years from now. To rely on opensource software or licenced but freeware software supported by large communities online should give a slightly higher probability of continuity, or at least a slightly higher probability of backwards compatibility that should at least allow to access and then update old data formats.

Here is a list of the software I have used:

- A. Gimp 2.8.10
  - Raster graphics editor.
  - <http://www.gimp.org/>
  - Licence: GNU General Public License v3+
  - I used Gimp as editor for most of the figures of the book. It is freely distributed, and it allows to edit a wide range of image formats.
- B. Inkscape 0.91
  - Professional vector graphics editor.
  - <http://www.inkscape.org/>
  - Licence: GNU General Public License v3+
  - I used Inkscape to create and edit vector images. Inkscape was also useful in the preliminary elaboration of the plans of Dunand's excavations used in the 3D modelling of the Obelisk Temple (§4.4).
- C. GraphClick 3.0.3
  - Graph digitiser software.



- <http://www.arizona-software.ch/graphclick/>
  - Licence: proprietary, distributed freeware
  - I used GraphClick 3.0.3 to retrieve the coordinates of objects and architectural features from the plans of Dunand's excavations.
- D. QGIS 2.8
- Geographic Information System.
  - <http://www.qgis.org/>
  - Licence: GNU General Public License
  - I used QGIS to elaborate satellite data and the geographical maps, as well as to calculate and generate the data used the heatmaps in §3.3, §3.4.
- E. Blender 2.75
- 3D computer graphics software.
  - <http://www.blender.org/>
  - Licence: GNU General Public License v2+
  - I used Blender to elaborate satellite data and to generate 3D geographical models, such as the images of the Lebanese coast used in §5.4.
- F. SketchUp Make 2014
- Raster graphics editor.
  - <http://www.sketchup.com>
  - Licence: proprietary, distributed freeware
  - I used Sketchup to create the 3D models of the Obelisk Temple (§4.4), and to elaborate the *terminus sub quo*, the *terminus super quem*, and the approximate stratigraphic sections derived from them (Appendix C). SketchUp is not an opensource software, but its basic version is freeware. Moreover, Sketchup projects can be shared online in virtual libraries and can be integrated into other packets, such as GoogleEarth, which could be useful in possible future developments of my project.
- G. ELKI 0.6.5
- “Data mining” software framework.
  - <http://elki-project.github.io>
  - Licence: GNU Affero General Public License v4+
  - I used ELKI in the preliminary analysis and elaboration of archaeological data.
- H. GNU Octave 3.4.0
- Software primarily intended for numerical computations.
  - <http://www.gnu.org/software/octave/>
  - Licence: GNU General Public License
  - I used GNU Octave in the preliminary analysis and elaboration of archaeological data.

## Online Supplement

In order to freely share and distribute not only the results, but also the sources of my research, I have decided to make all my data freely available online.

To make it easily accessible, I decided to use GitHub, a free opensource cloud service which already host thousands of projects and datasets. In addition to freely storing the data indeterminately, Github offers also the possibility to download the files it hosts. This means that new analyses and subprojects could easily be created and linked with my original repository if anyone wishes to do so.

The address of the GitHub repository associated with this book is the following: <https://github.com/Kilani-DPhil/Byblos>

### 1 GitHub Repository – Content

The following sets of data are available in the GitHub repository.

#### Database files

As explained in §2.3, one of the results of my research was the development of a database collecting the objects found by Dunand in his campaigns of 1926–1932 and 1933–1938, and published in his catalogue volumes (§2.1.3). The resulting data, collected in .csv files, are available in the GitHub repository. The table presents the catalogue number, the findspot coordinates, a transcription of Dunand's entry automatically obtained with OCR software, as well as various other information about the objects themselves (such as their category, material, provenance etc). A *readme* file explaining how to read the .csv table is also available in the github repository. A working, searchable version of the database is also available online. It is currently hosted on Heroku, a git-based provider using a PostgreSQL database engine. The address is the following: [http://kilani.herokuapp.com/byblos\\_db/](http://kilani.herokuapp.com/byblos_db/). Note however that the location of this database could change in the future. The updated address of the database, however, is available in a specific *readme* file in the main github repository.

### 3D models – Obelisk Temple

Files of the 3D models of the Obelisk Temple discussed in the book (in particular §4.4). Both the files of the 3D models (.skp format) and the raw sets of coordinates used to generate them (.csv format) are available.

### 3D models – Stratigraphy

Files of the 3D renditions of the *terminussubquo* and *terminussuperquem* plans discussed in Appendix C. Both the files of the 3D models (.skp format) and the raw sets of coordinates used to generate them (.csv format) are available.

### Approximate stratigraphy

Files of the approximate vertical stratigraphies along the x axes of Dunand's excavation grid for the campaigns 1933–1938. Presented also in Appendix C.

### 3D model of the Lebanese coast

3D model of the Lebanese coast obtained from satellite data and used in figures 5.3 and 5.4.

### Maps and plans

QGIS files for the various maps and plans used in the book, including the heat-maps presented in §3.3 and §3.4.

### Objects

Data about specific categories of objects discussed in the book. In particular, .csv tables with data about Mycenaean pottery (§3.2), scarabs (§3.3), spindle whorls (§3.4), and loom weights (§3.4) are available.

### Images

Any image created by the author and used in the book.

# Identification of the Late Bronze Age Layers

## 1 Definition of the Theoretical Framework

Without stratigraphic data, it is challenging to identify the Bronze Age layers of Byblos. The structure of the site is an obstacle: not only is there the complex and often uneven stratigraphic development typical of any urban area, it is also clear that many sectors were disturbed or destroyed by natural phenomena (erosion) or by later (especially Graeco-Roman and medieval) activities. Dunand himself observed that “à Byblos les couches hellénistiques et romaines sont souvent superposées directement aux couches du Moyen Empire” (Dunand 1939, 64; see also p. 9). Still, mentions of Late Bronze Age material and architectural remains are scattered through his publications, suggesting that Late Bronze Age layers did survive here and there. It is thus important to determine where these layers could have been. While it is clear that it is not possible to reconstruct the stratigraphy of the whole site, Dunand (1954, 3–5) suggested a method for making a partial reconstruction possible (see above §2.1.2, §2.1.3, §2.1.4).

Dunand’s ideas are a good starting point and can be further developed. In particular, on the basis of the principles of stratigraphy one can assume that an object found above another one is later in date than the latter, unless some disruption has occurred. Therefore, the lowest object of a given period can be taken as a reference point, a “*terminus sub quo*,” under which the uncontaminated layers of the previous periods could be located – “could be” rather than “are,” because layers of previous periods might have been contaminated by later material or might be absent, either because they never existed or because they were destroyed. If uncontaminated layers of previous periods do exist, then they must be located below that point. If instead there has been a disruption, one may find a later object below an earlier layer. In this case, the object will still be a valid “*terminus sub quo*,” but one that will mark the possible limits of the disruption itself.

So for example, if in a given Column (see §2.3 for the terminology used here) there is Greek material in levées 1, 3, and 4, it can be assumed that the Late Bronze Age layer was either located somewhere below levée 4 or, if it was above those levels, it was contaminated or destroyed by later activities. Obviously, such a limit is only a possible stratigraphic indication. If the Late Bronze Age layers never existed or were destroyed, this limit may lie directly on earlier strata, dating for instance to the Middle or Early Bronze Age.

Another aspect to take into consideration is that not all the columns of the excavations have yielded material that can be used to define such a *terminus sub quo*. This

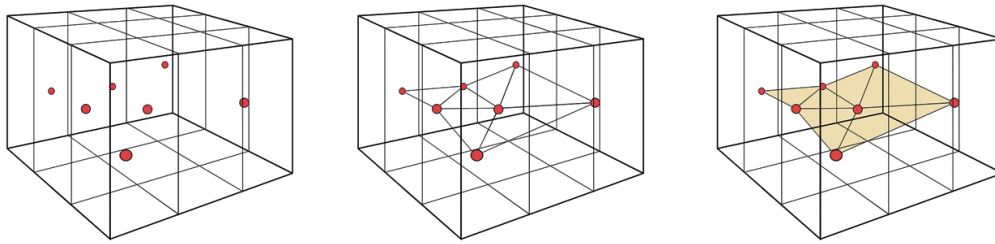


FIGURE C.1 Stratigraphic data – Triangulation. The lowest dating objects of each column (red dots here) can be triangulated to build an artificial plane approximating the *terminus sub quo*. The triangulation allows the plane and the *terminus* to be projected also in those columns that do not contain any dating object.

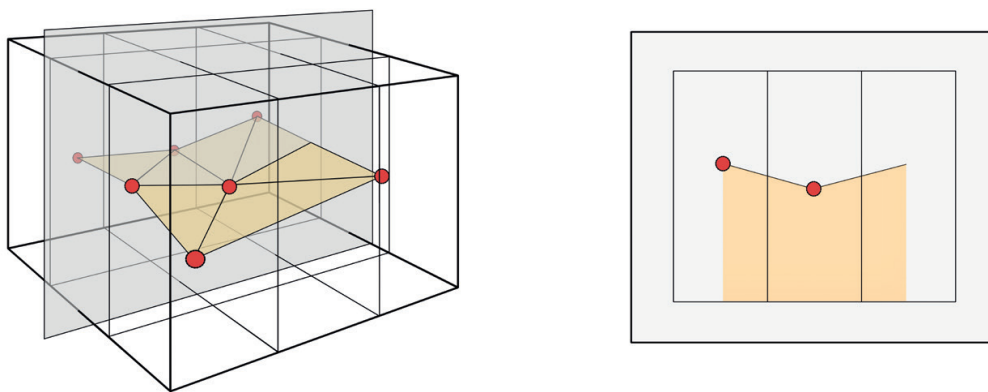


FIGURE C.2 Stratigraphic data – Triangulation and section. Starting from the three-dimensional representation, it is possible to obtain vertical sections in which the projection of the *terminus sub quo* can be used as a stratigraphic guideline.

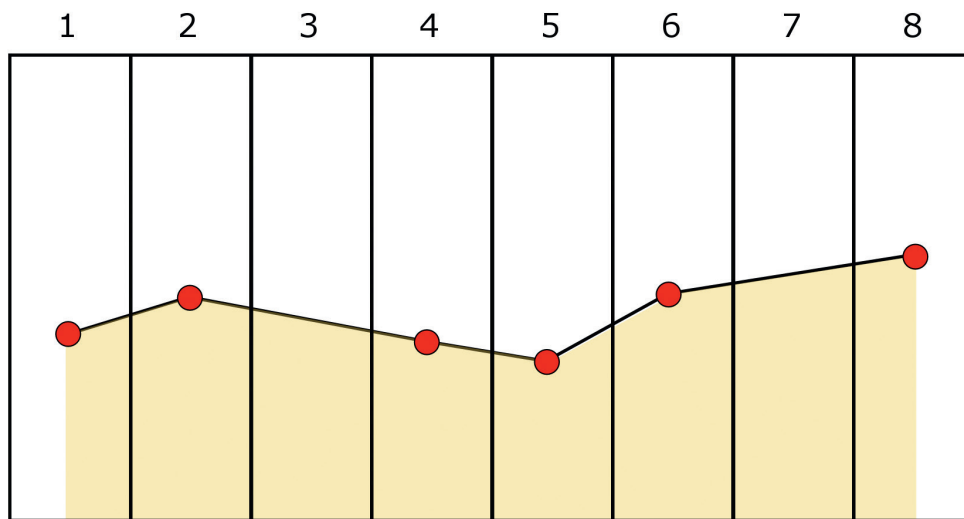
problem can be managed by using those Excavation Units that did yield dating objects as reference points for a triangulation that creates a virtual plane encompassing all the relevant area. This plane approximates the limit of the *terminus sub quo* for the Late Bronze Age layers also in those columns that did not yield any diagnostic dating artefact. In this way the gaps in the information represented by these empty columns will be filled in by an average value represented by the plane and inferred from the values of the *terminus sub quo* in those columns around it that have yielded objects. This approach is illustrated graphically in fig. C.1.

After having defined the position of the plane corresponding to the *terminus sub quo*, it is possible to obtain a series of vertical sections of the site along the x or y lines of the excavation grid. These sections enable one to visualise where the limits of the layers so defined are located in relation to the levées. They can therefore be considered as an approximate guideline for the stratigraphy of the site, although a rough and loose one, with a resolution of only one Excavation Unit (fig. C.2).



It is clear that if the columns and Excavation Units with diagnostic objects are close to each other, the resulting approximation of the layer in the adjacent and intermediate empty columns will have a relatively high degree of reliability. If, however, the Excavation Units with dating objects used as reference points are some distance away, the resulting plane is potentially less reliable and precise (fig. C.3).

### Case 1



### Case 2

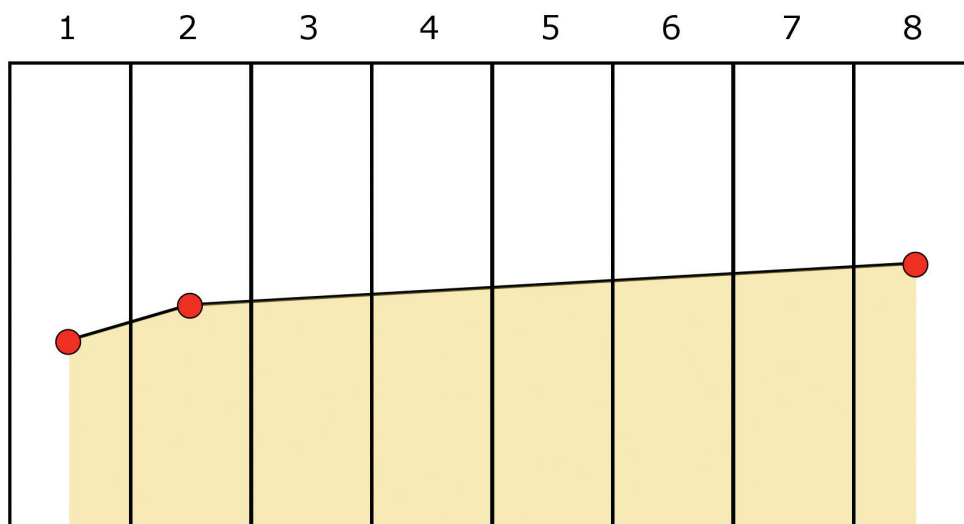


FIGURE C.3 Stratigraphic data – Sections. In case 1, six of the eight columns have dating objects on which the *terminus* can be based. In this case, the estimation of the limit for the two empty columns can be considered relatively accurate, as it is inferred from the position of the dating objects in the adjacent columns. In case 2, by contrast, only three of the eight columns have dating objects. The estimation of the *terminus* in the five remaining, intermediate empty columns is therefore much less precise.

Due to the limitations of the data available, the resolution of such a reconstructed stratigraphic model is relatively low. Since the location of the objects is given only by Excavation Units, the resolution of the reconstructed stratigraphy cannot be higher than that of the unit. This means that although it is possible to identify the Excavation Unit containing the limit of the layer, it is not possible to define where and how this limit passes within that Unit. According to Lauffray,<sup>1</sup> Dunand did use a more precise system of coordinates to record the absolute location of every object discovered. These data could be used to refine the stratigraphy, but if they have survived, they have never been published.

In addition to the definition of this *terminus sub quo* for the Late Bronze Age layers, it is also possible to try to define a *terminus super quem*, that is, the upper limit of the layers of the periods preceding the Late Bronze Age. The principle is the same, but reversed: the *terminus super quem* can be defined using the highest attestation of material of previous periods.

This *terminus super quem*, however, is much less indicative than the *terminus sub quo*, since whereas only direct vertical contamination can introduce a later object into an earlier layer, many factors can cause an earlier object to be found in a later layer. In addition, if a later-object-into-earlier-layer contamination is usually limited in space to the area affected by the disturbance, an earlier-object-into-later-layer contamination can also involve significant horizontal displacements: for example earth (and associated objects) dug out from a pit could be deposited very far from the pit itself. Similarly, an object that has been circulating for decades or even centuries could end up in chronologically and spatially unrelated contexts. As a consequence, the presence of an object in a certain place does not necessarily imply that the layers below it belong to the same or to an earlier period, nor that the area has been disturbed: the object could have been brought to the surface elsewhere and could have been moved there at a later time.

These are serious limitations, and therefore the *terminus super quem* should be seen only as a very approximate guide. With some adjustment, however, these limitations can be contained and the *terminus super quem* can be fine tuned in order to obtain a relatively valid stratigraphic indicator. In particular, identifying coherent ensembles of objects, rather than isolated objects, improves the reliability of a *terminus super quem*. It is clear that one isolated Middle Bronze Age pot is not indicative of a Middle Bronze Age layer, but a group of Middle Bronze Age vessels within a small vertical or horizontal range of Excavation Units would point to the presence of a stratigraphic ensemble that might reflect a Middle Bronze Age layer. Focusing on intact, fragile objects

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<sup>1</sup> Lauffray 1995, 457. The existence of such a system can also be inferred from the precise location of the objects in the plans of Volume II and by the scattered mentions of specific coordinates in that volume (see e.g., Dunand 1954, 26, 272).

is another productive strategy, so that ceramics are a very good choice. Vessels break easily, either before deposition or as a consequence of later disturbance, and their sherds can easily get out of context. Sherds are thus poor indicators for the *terminus super quem*, but vessels that are intact or broken but complete, can indicate deposition and little or no disturbance.

## 2 Definition of the Terminus Sub Quo and Terminus Super Quem

As mentioned above, the *terminus sub quo* and the *terminus super quem* for the Late Bronze Age layers can be defined only for the section of the site excavated between 1933 and 1938, which was published in enough detail for such an approach to be viable. The grid of the earlier excavations was too wide and too irregular, while the material excavated later has never been published. In terms of material, the area excavated between 1933 and 1938 is also the most productive for such an approach: the area excavated before 1933 is relatively small, with limited quantities of objects,<sup>2</sup> while the campaigns after 1938 focused mainly on the walls or on areas outside them and, according to the published reports, they uncovered mainly, if not exclusively, remains from the Iron Age or the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods (See §2.1.3).

In order to define the *terminus sub quo*, abundant and widespread objects that postdate the Bronze Age are needed, so that many reference points across the surface under analysis will be available. Pottery and potsherds are ideal, but two problems have to be considered. First, only a small part of the pottery found was listed in Dunand's catalogue (1939, 9). Second, even the published sherds are not described or assessed in detail, and therefore too often cannot be dated. Some later studies treat particular categories of pottery from Byblos, but these mostly focus on pre-Late Bronze Age material and are not useful in the definition of the *terminus sub quo* (compare Williams 1975; Saghie 1983; Thalmann 2008). There are two notable exceptions. The first is a group of Iron Age vessels identified and studied by Grace Homsy (2003). Homsy was able to study some of the pottery excavated by Dunand that is now kept in the Museum in Byblos. Her work is not exhaustive, as the vessels she had access to represent only a fraction of the pottery excavated,<sup>3</sup> but she succeeded in identifying 120 Iron Age

2 5756 objects found under Dunand between 1926 and 1933 (Dunand 1939) versus 12537 objects found between 1933 and 1938 (Dunand 1954).

3 The remaining part, which Homsy was unable to study, is in Beirut. It is impossible to estimate the size of this group and what percentage of the pottery found under Dunand it may represent. It is, however, clear that various vessels appearing in Dunand's catalogue that could date to the Iron Age are absent from Homsy's list (e.g., nos. 9864, 9931, 10378, 11199, and 13034, which are similar to 10377 and 14019, recognised by Homsy as dating to the Iron Age). This could be because she did not have access to them or she did not recognise them.

vessels of various types. However, their usefulness for the present study is limited since, of the 120 vessels she lists, only 20 came from the area of the 1933–1938 excavations, with one of those being a surface find whose original place of deposition is not known.

Handles of amphorae and other vessels bearing stamp impressions with Greek inscriptions and Greek iconography can also be used here, as they are all later than the Late Bronze Age. Dunand published them in his catalogue and, in view of the close attention that he paid to all kinds of inscribed objects, the handles that he listed are likely to represent a good part, perhaps the totality, of those found in the excavations (see Dunand 1954, x). Given their abundance and their ubiquity on the site, they are very good stratigraphic indicators.

Coins can also help in the definition of the *terminus sub quo*, having been introduced to Phoenicia in the fifth century BCE, long after the Late Bronze Age. Like the stamped handles, coins are quite abundant, ubiquitous, and well documented by Dunand. Neither of these categories dates to the periods immediately after the Late Bronze Age, but they are the best available markers in the published material. This gap in time means that any possible Late Bronze Age layers could be a little deeper than the level indicated by the *terminus sub quo*. Since, however a gap corresponding to the Early and Middle Iron Age layers has been observed (Mazza 1994; Homsy 2003, 246), it is possible that a *terminus* defined in this way could be quite close to the limits of the Late Bronze Age layers.

For the definition of the *terminus super quem*, I use the Early and Middle Bronze Age vessels studied and classified by Saghie-Beydoun (1983), Williams (1975), and Thalmann (2008). Although these vessels do not represent the totality of the pottery of these periods recorded by Dunand, they are numerous and widespread enough to cover the entirety of the area studied here. These vessels are generally complete,<sup>4</sup> which increases their validity as stratigraphic indicators.

Among the objects that would ideally be used in defining the *terminus sub quo* and the *terminus super quem*, some have to be left out, either because they are clearly in a disturbed context or because their coordinates are flawed by errors in Dunand's publication; these are listed in the online supplement (see Appendix B). This leaves ninety-five valid points of reference for the *terminus sub quo* and seventy-one for the *terminus super quem*. By using 3D modelling software (here Google Sketchup) it is possible to plot these points and to obtain a model of the excavation with the two *termini* represented as planes. In order to have a spatial frame of reference within which the planes of the *termini* can be plotted, I have defined the original topographical profile of the whole area excavated by Dunand. This topographical profile is obtained by plotting the coordinates of the highest objects found in each Column, that is, the first object found under the surface in each Column. The results of this process are displayed in §C.3.1 below.

<sup>4</sup> Although they could have been broken when discovered.

### 3 Figures

#### 3.1 *Terminus Sub Quo and Terminus Super Quem*

In figure C.4 the *terminus sub quo* plane is plotted together with the surface of the site, while in figure C.5 the surface is removed and the plane itself is visible. In figure C.6 the *terminus super quem* is plotted together with the *terminus sub quo* and with the surface. In figure C.7 the *terminus super quem* is plotted only with the surface, in figure C.8 only with the *terminus sub quo*, and finally in figure C.9 it is plotted alone. In the following figures the vertical dimension is magnified ten times in relation to the horizontal one. The general profile of the areas of the site that are being investigated is thus emphasised, which allows to better appreciate the vertical sections obtained.

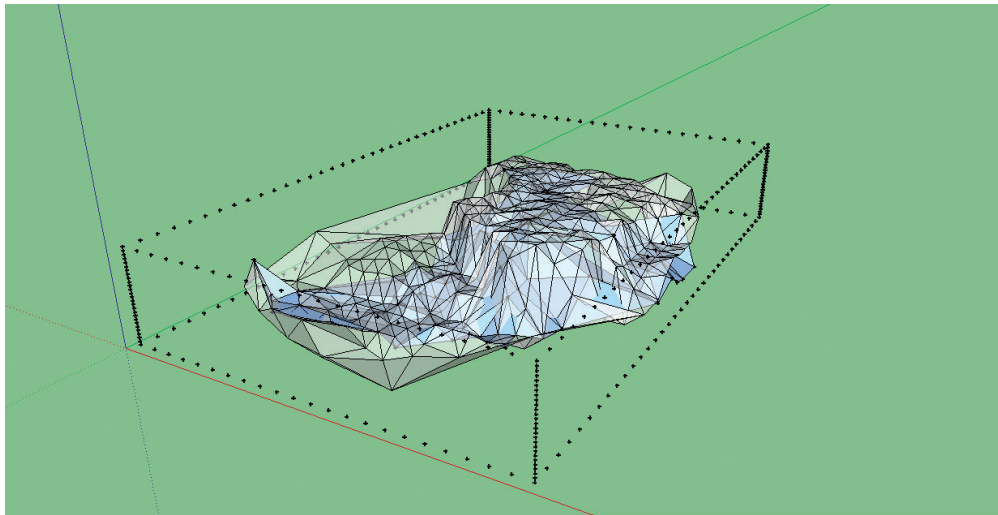


FIGURE C.4A

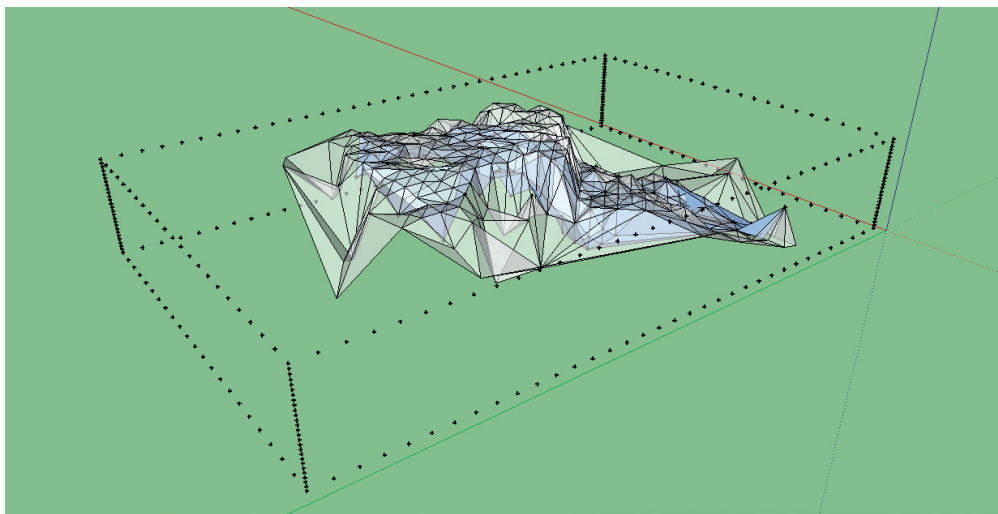


FIGURE C.4B



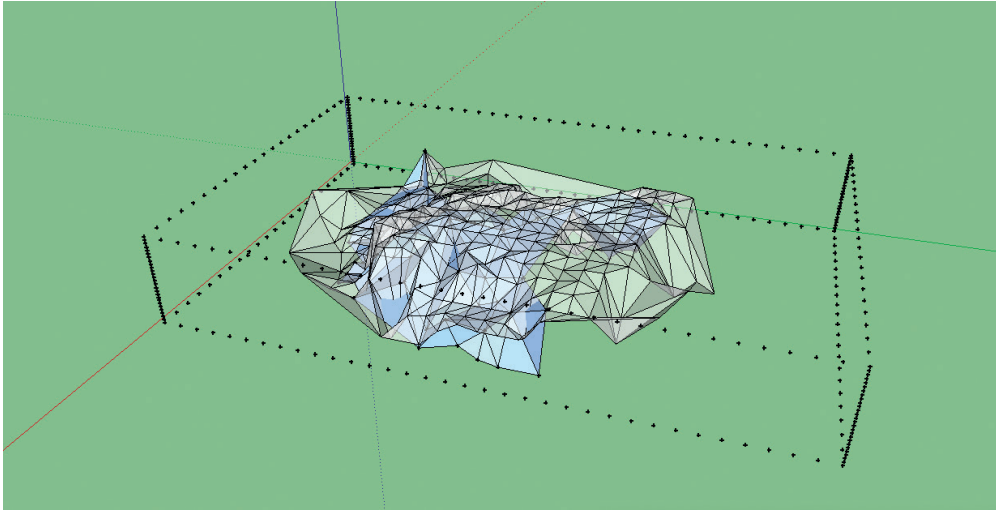


FIGURE C.4C

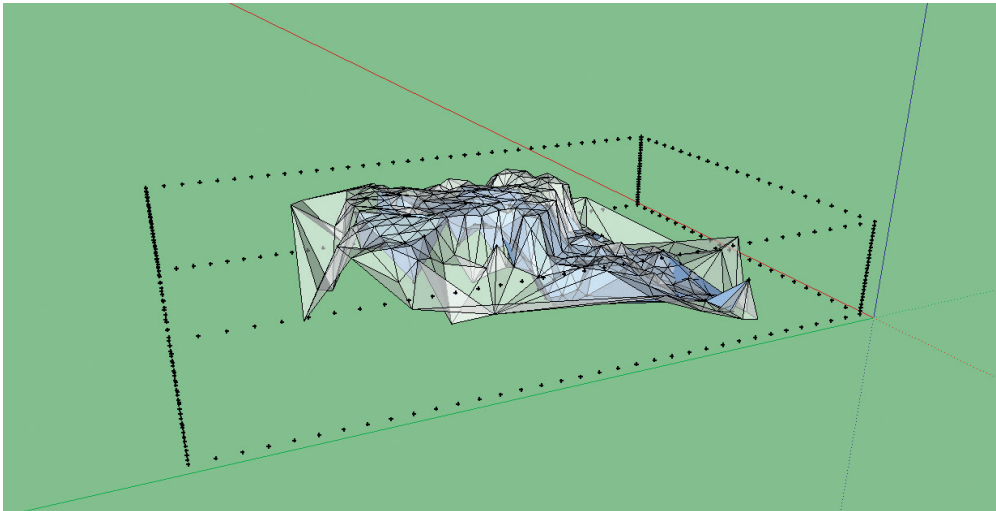


FIGURE C.4D

FIGURE C.4 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus sub quo* (blue) together with the surface of the area excavated (white)

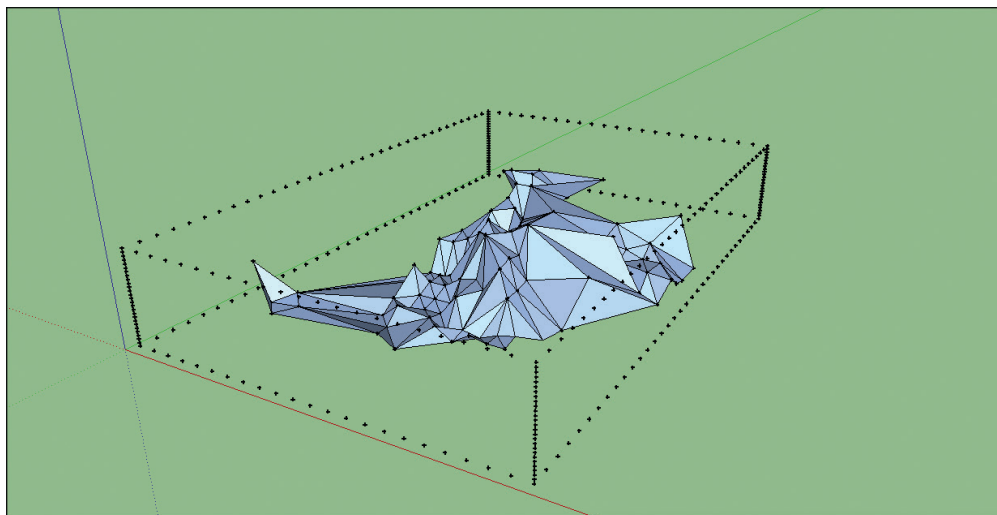


FIGURE C.5A

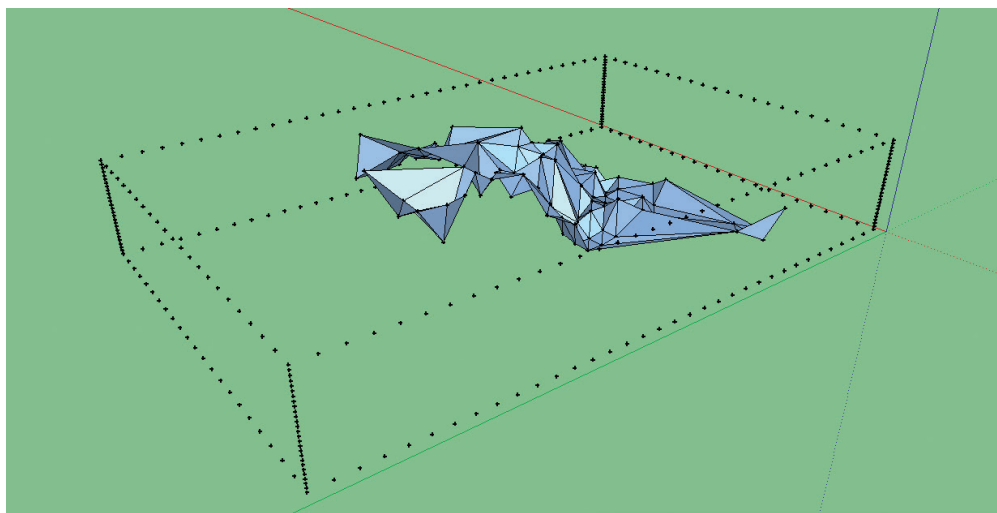


FIGURE C.5B

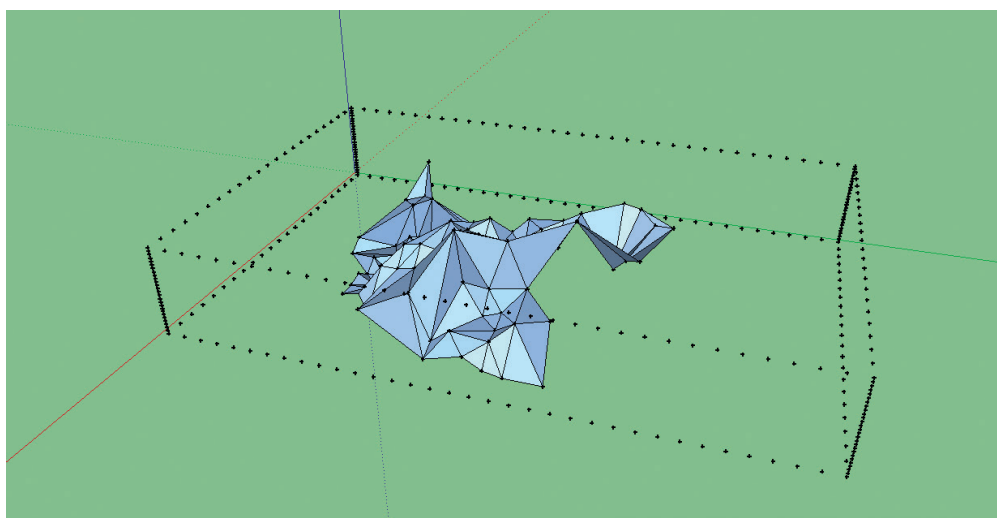


FIGURE C.5C

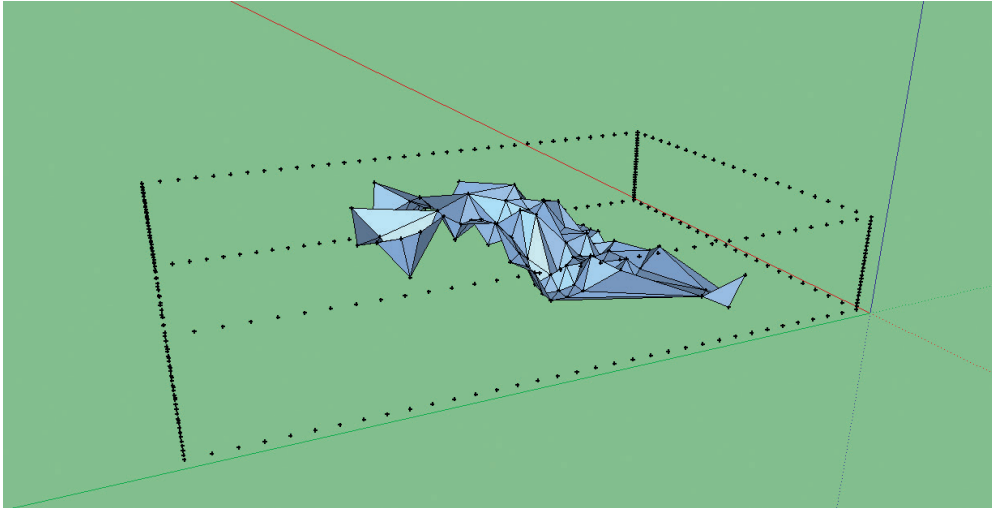


FIGURE C.5D

FIGURE C.5 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus sub quo* (blue)

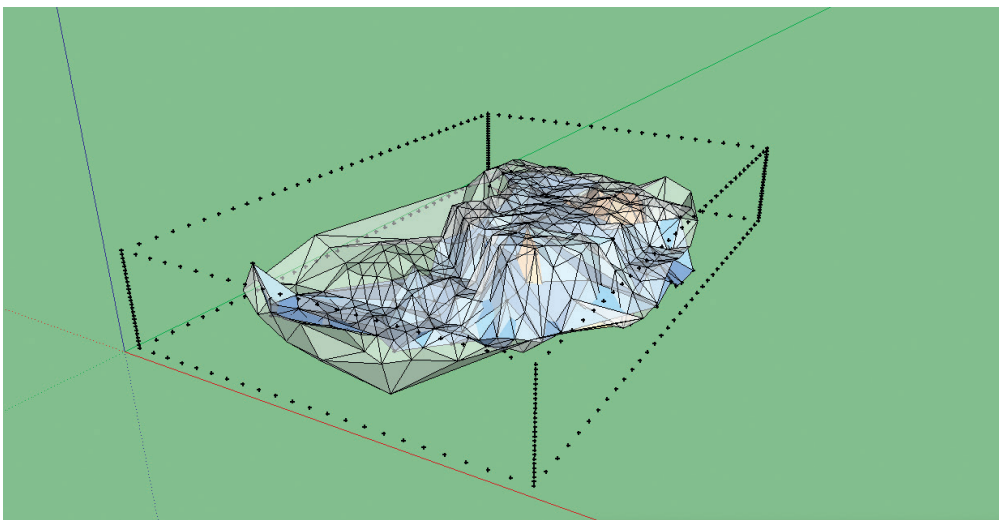


FIGURE C.6A

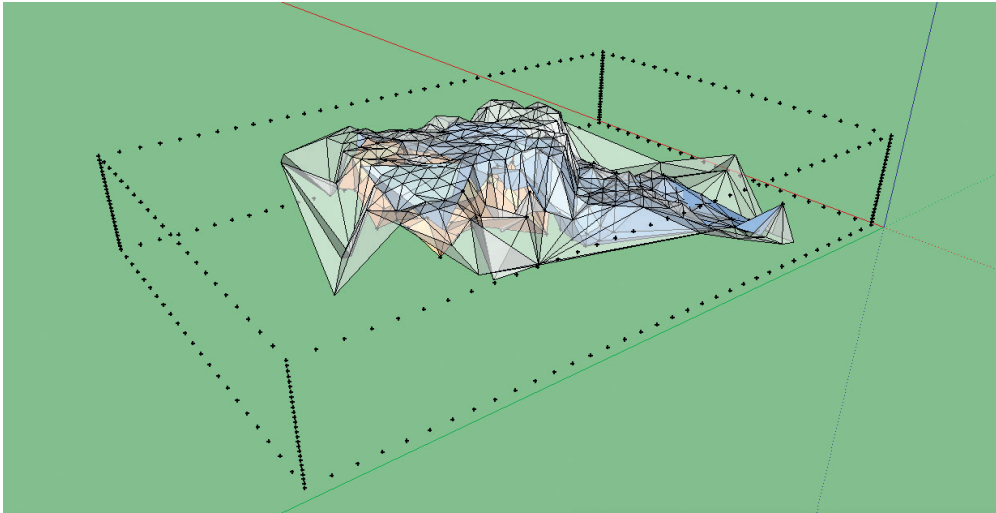


FIGURE C.6B

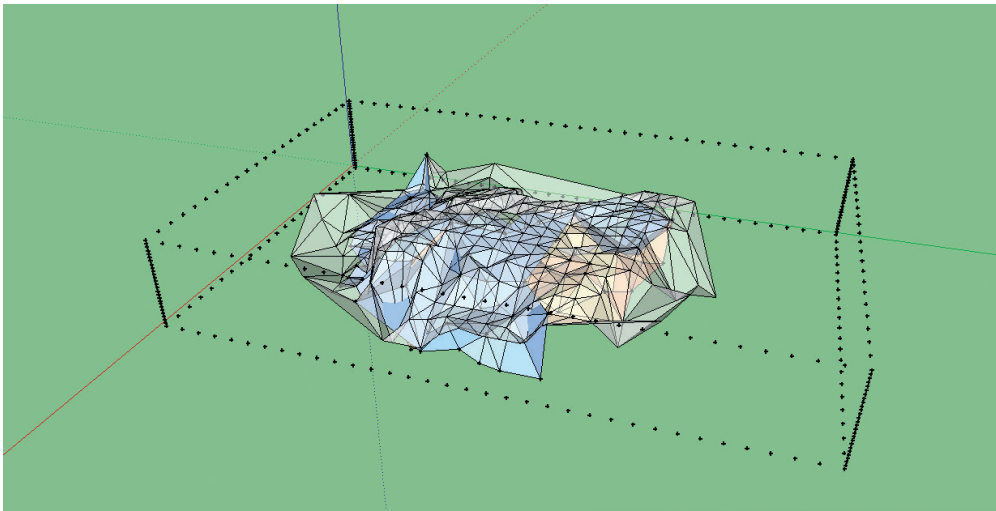


FIGURE C.6C

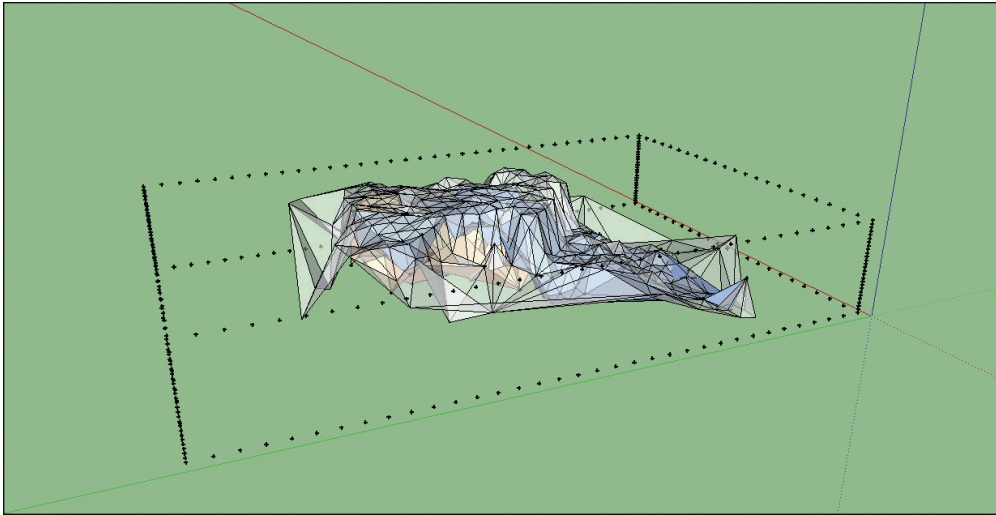


FIGURE C.6D

FIGURE C.6 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus sub quo* (blue) together with the *terminus super quem* (yellow) and the surface of the excavated area (white)

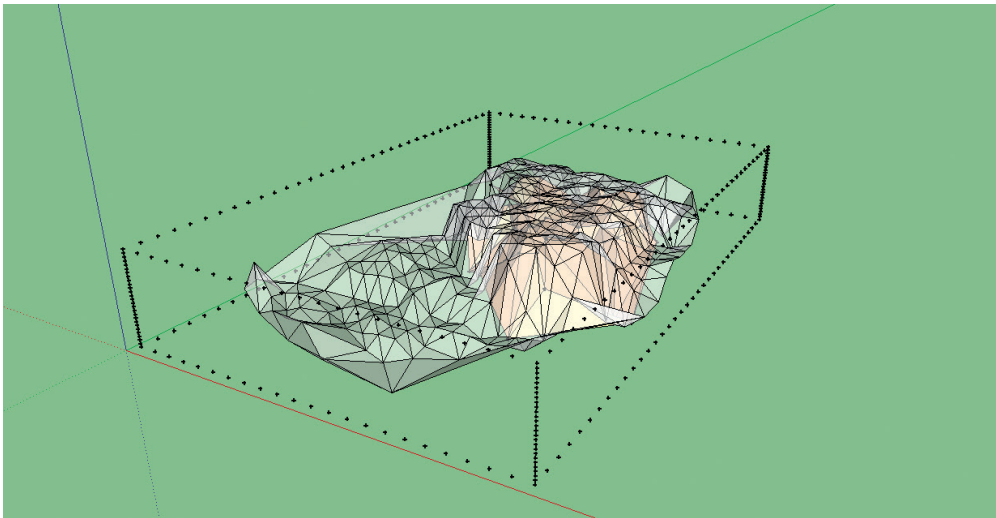


FIGURE C.7A



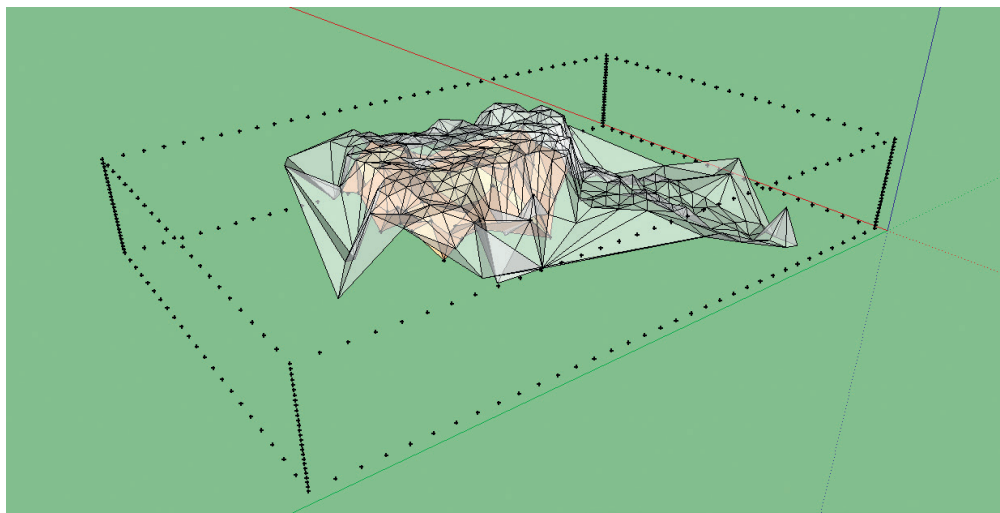


FIGURE C.7B

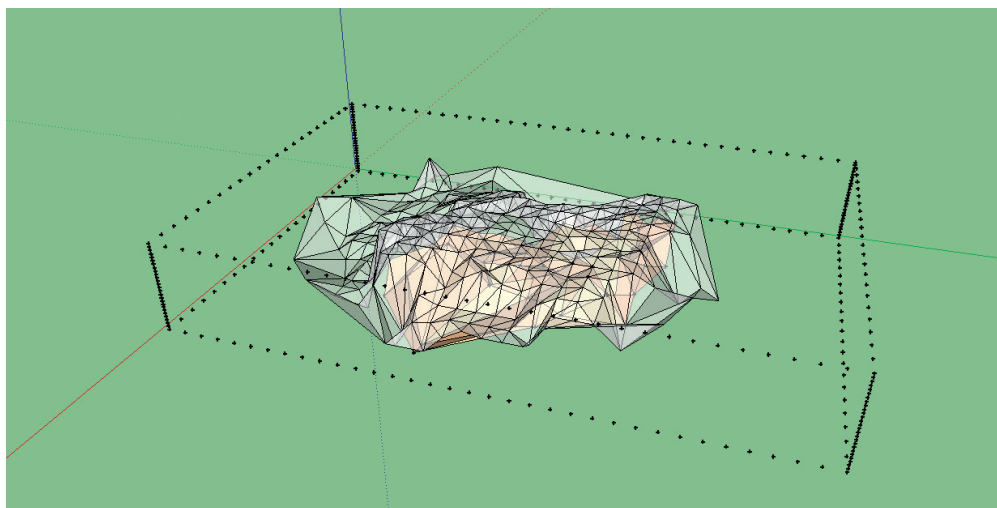


FIGURE C.7C

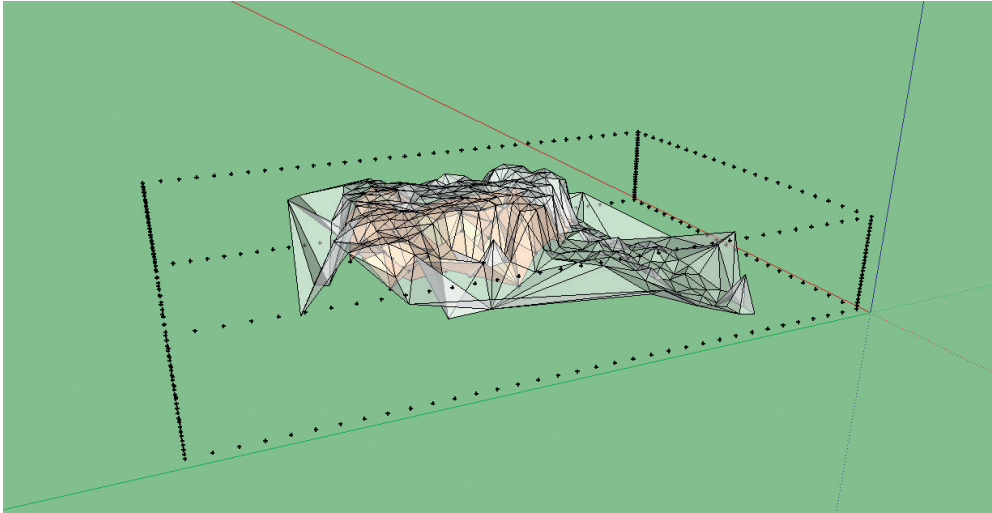


FIGURE C.7D

FIGURE C.7 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus super quem* (yellow) together with the surface of the excavated area (white)

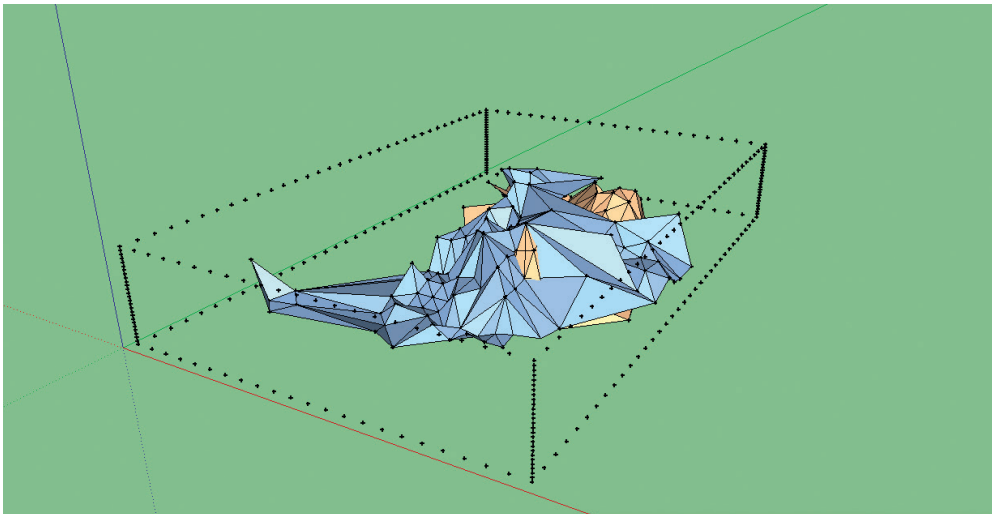


FIGURE C.8A

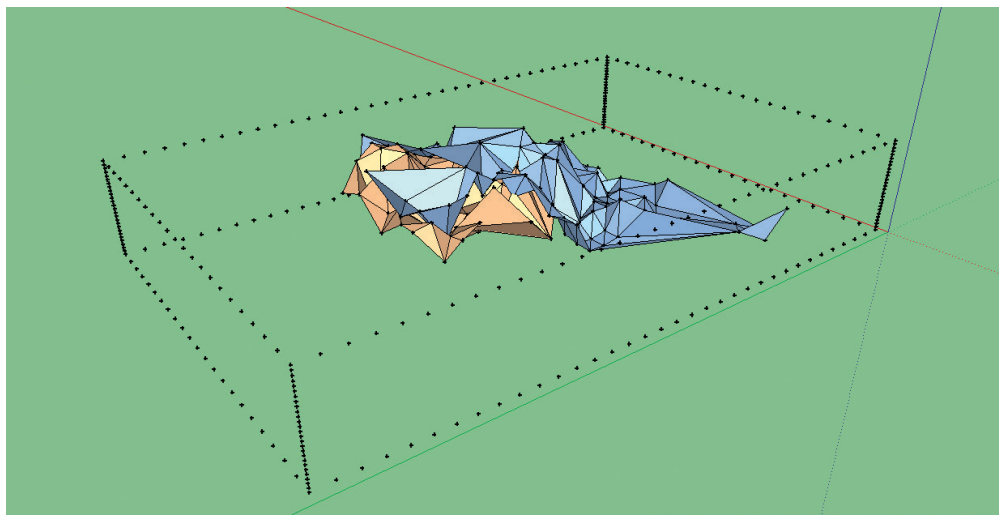


FIGURE C.8B

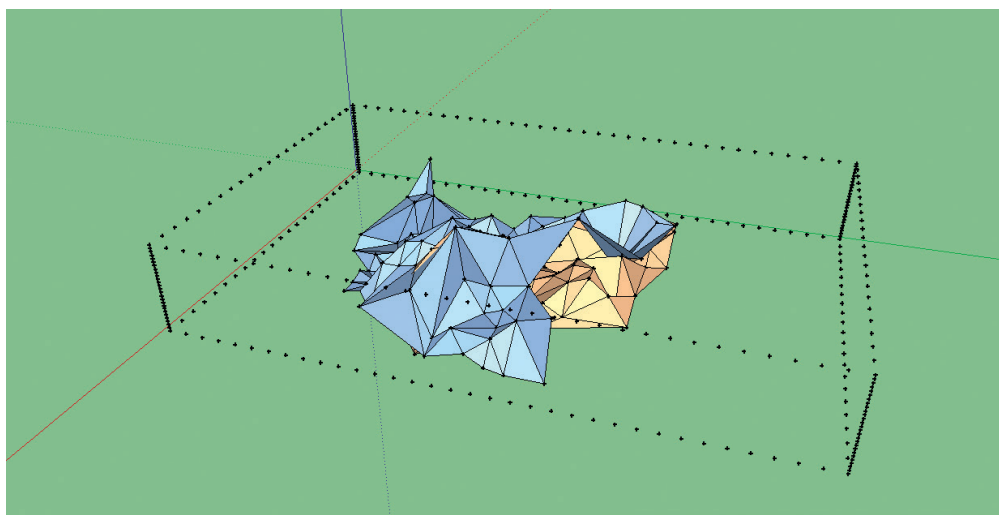


FIGURE C.8C

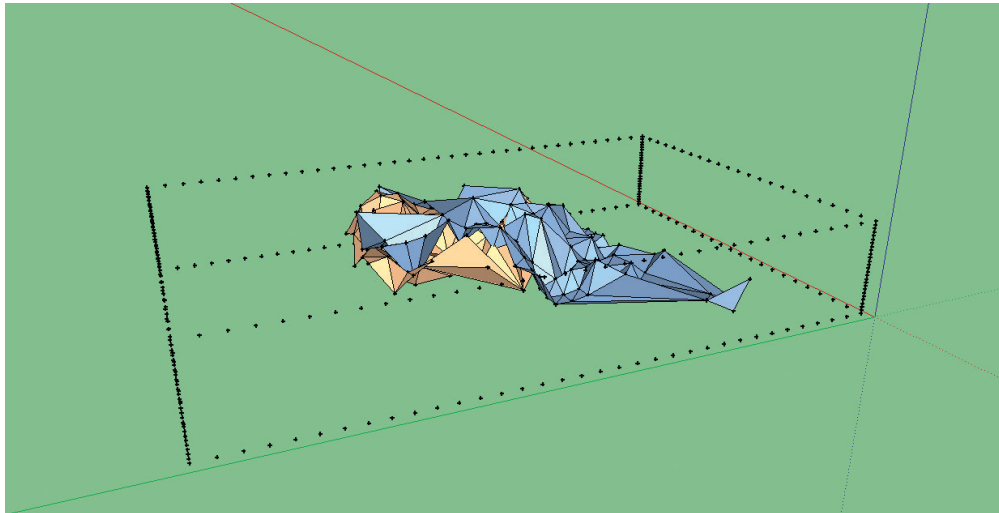


FIGURE C.8D

FIGURE C.8 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus sub quo* (blue) together with the *terminus super quem* (yellow)

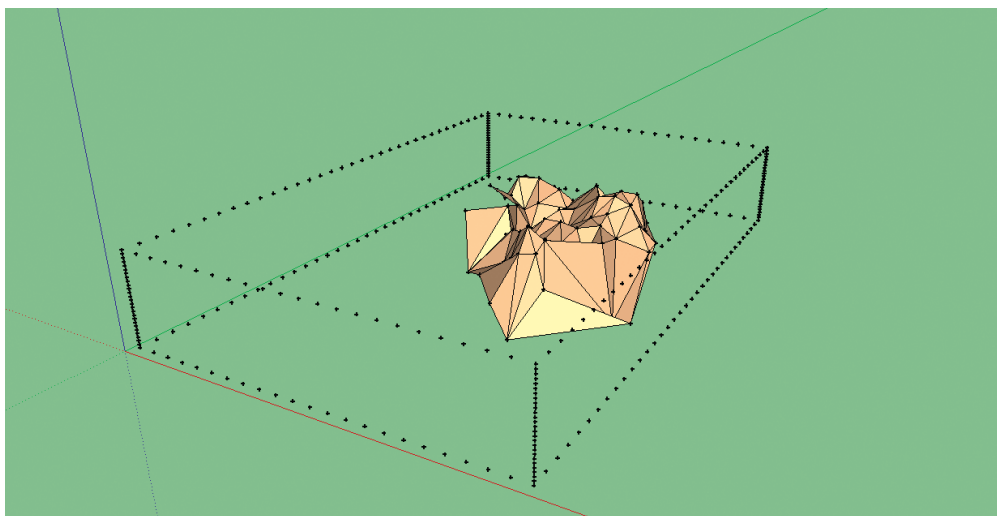


FIGURE C.9A

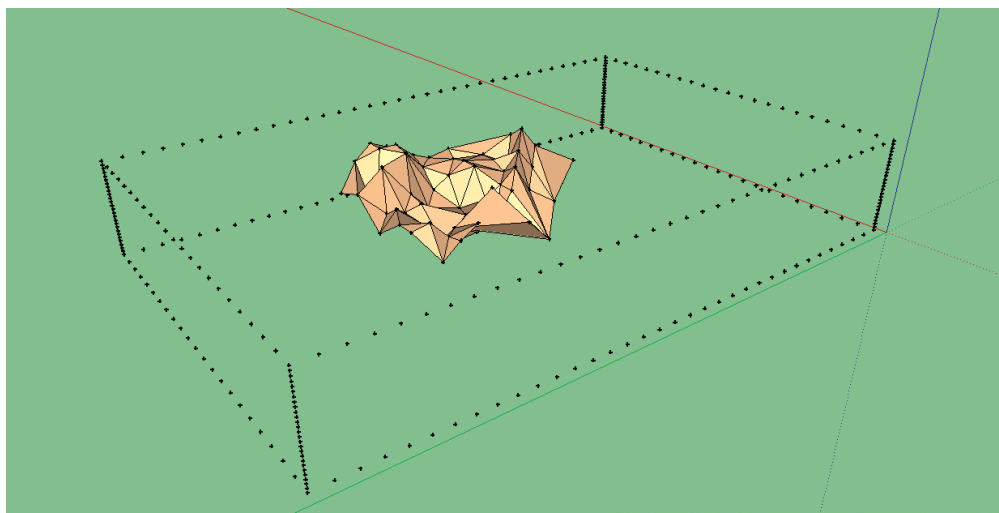


FIGURE C.9B

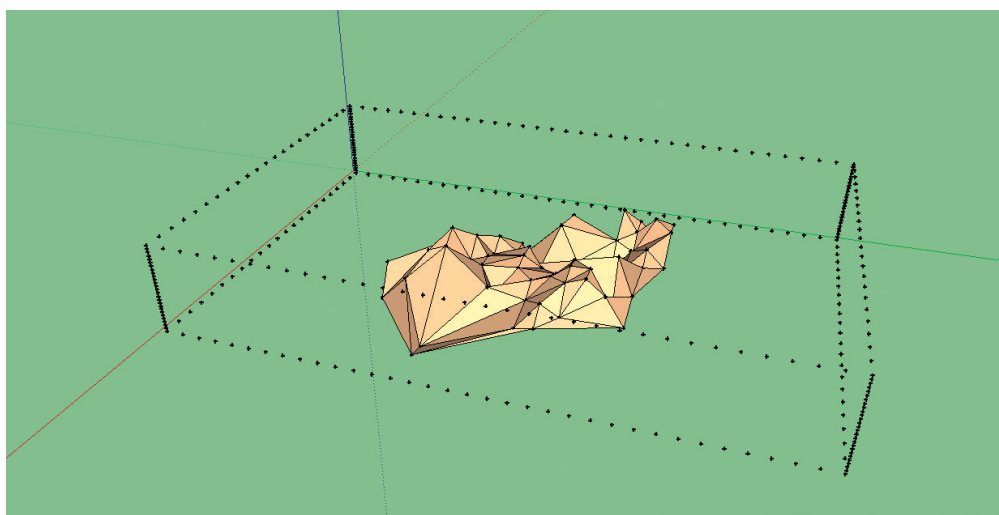


FIGURE C.9C



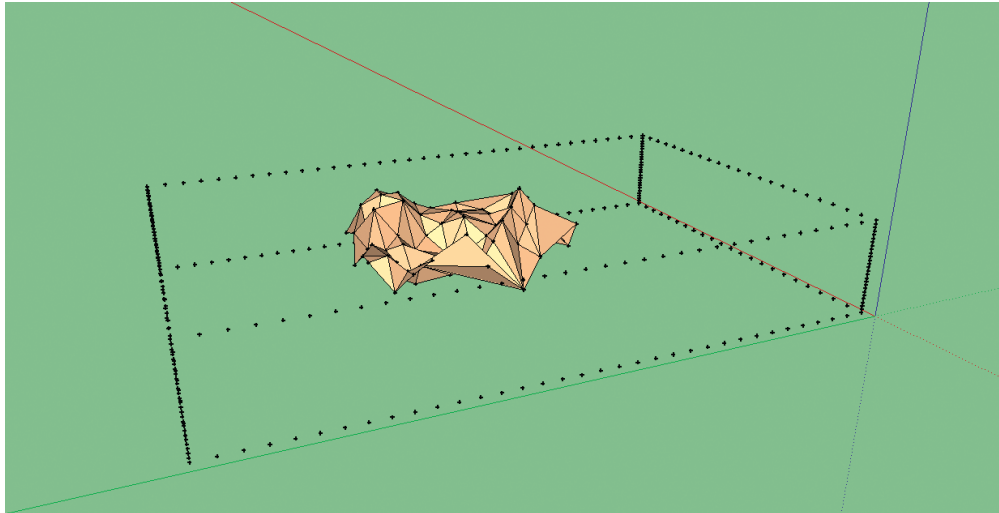


FIGURE C.9D

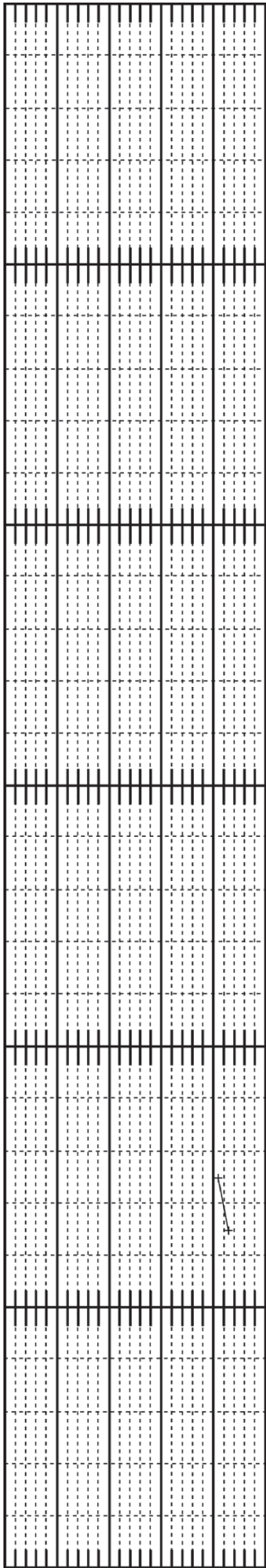
FIGURE C.9 Stratigraphic data – *Terminus sub quo*. a–d) 3D representation of the *terminus super quem* (yellow)

### 3.2 *Approximate Stratigraphy*

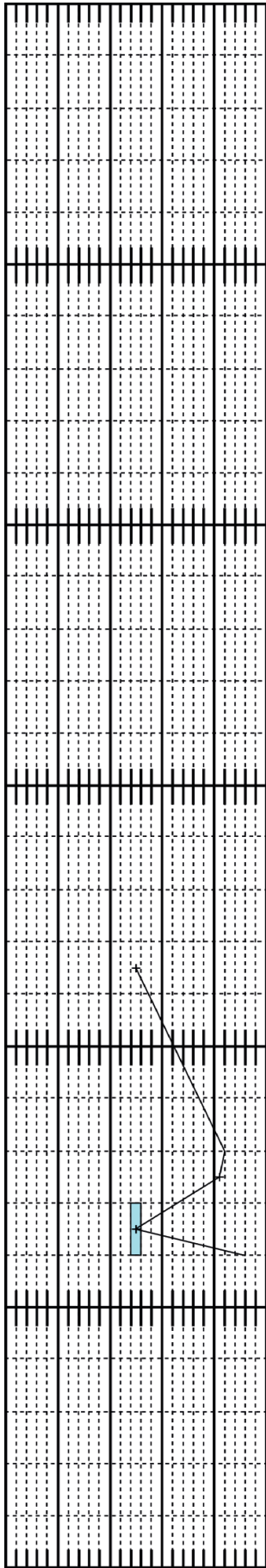
This 3D model can then be cut along the x and y coordinates of Dunand's excavation grid to obtain vertical sections with representations of the *termini*. These vertical sections can be used as approximate stratigraphic guidelines for the site. The figures below show the approximate stratigraphies along the x axis, one for each x line of the excavation grid. The stratigraphies along the y axis can be inferred and built from them.

The Excavation Units located between the surface and the *terminus sub quo* are marked in blue, while those located below the *terminus super quem* are marked in yellow (dark blue/dark yellow = columns with diagnostic dating objects, light blue/light yellow columns without dating objects whose limit has been inferred from the projection of the planes). If present and not disturbed, the Late Bronze Age layers should be located below the blue Excavation Units, and possibly above the yellow ones. The vertical dimension is magnified ten times in respect to the horizontal one.

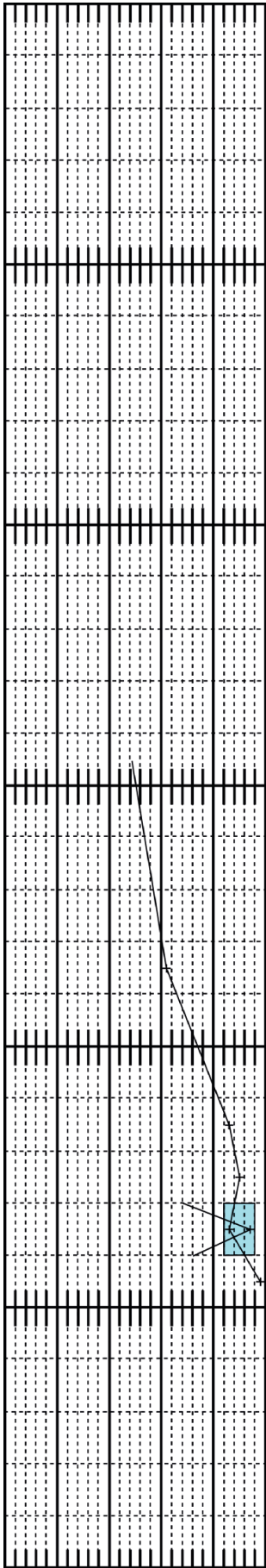
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 1



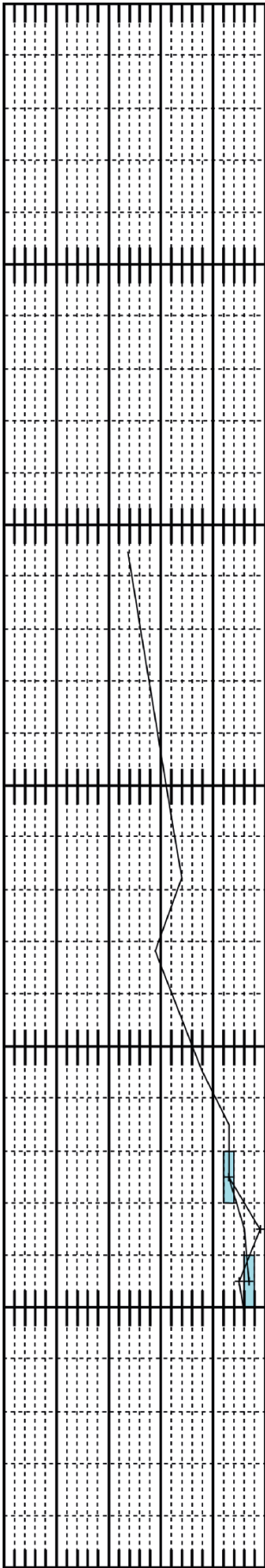
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 2



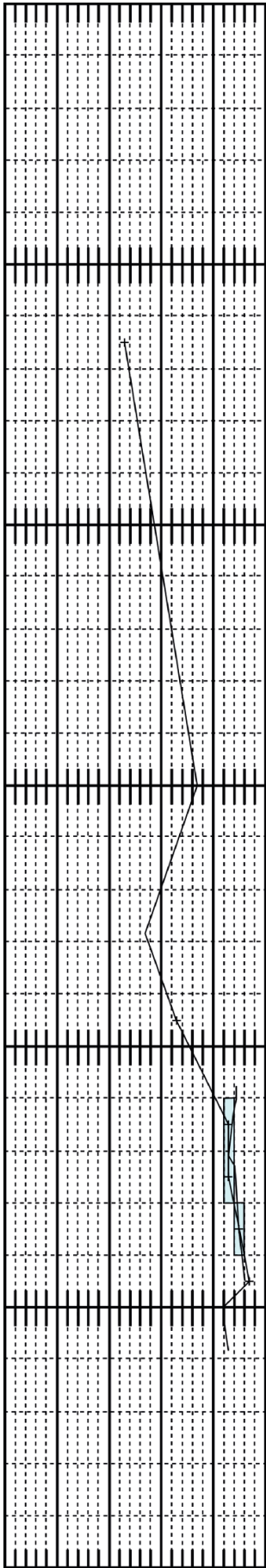
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 3



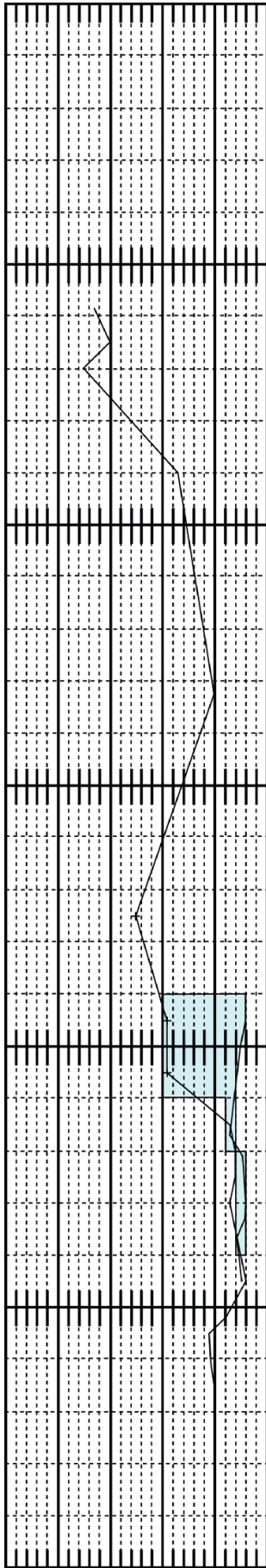
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 4



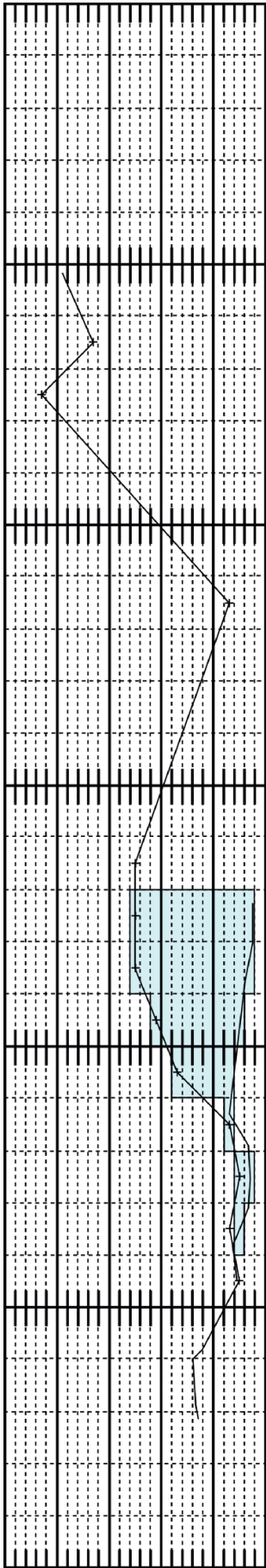
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 5



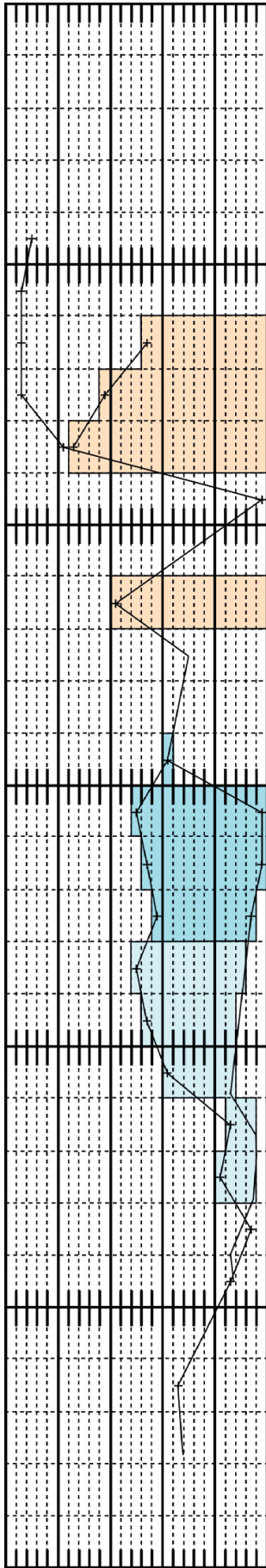
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 6



Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 7



Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 8

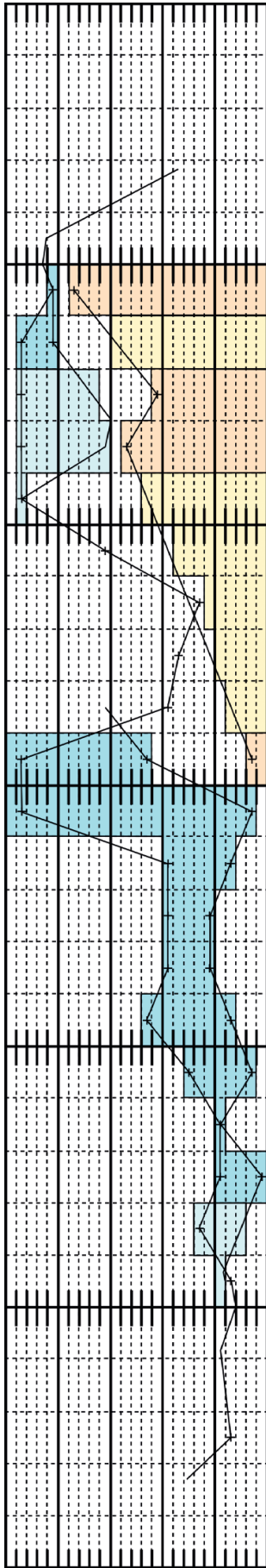




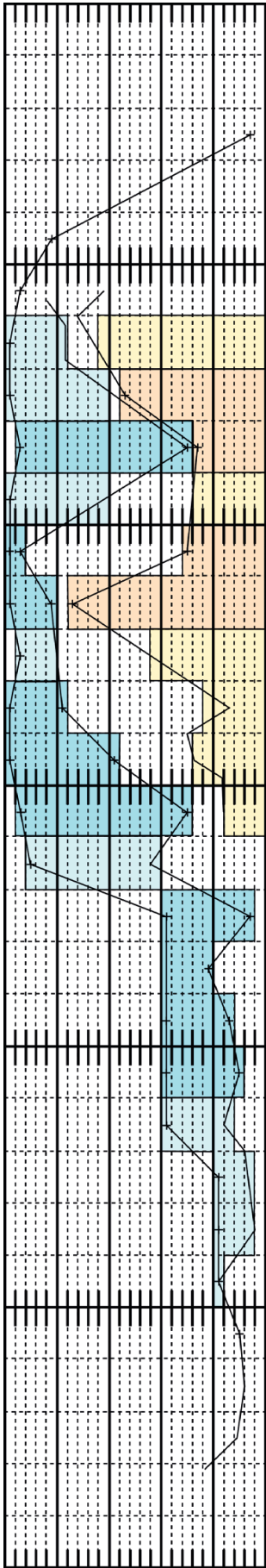
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 9



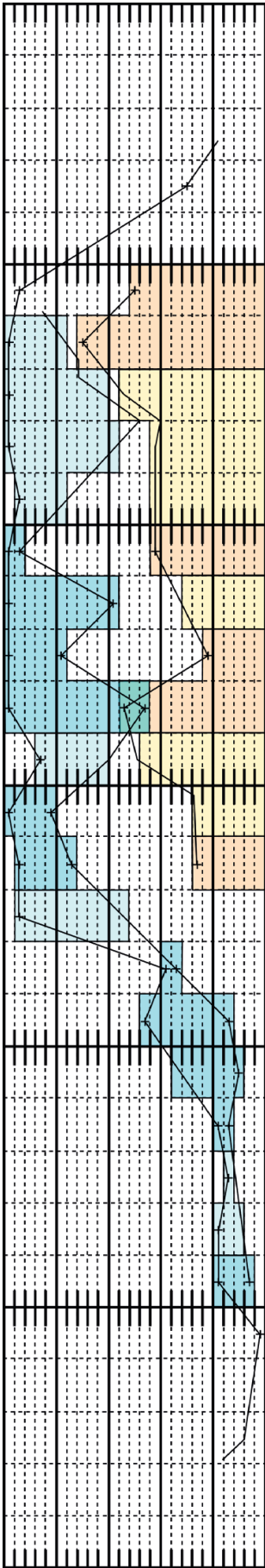
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 10



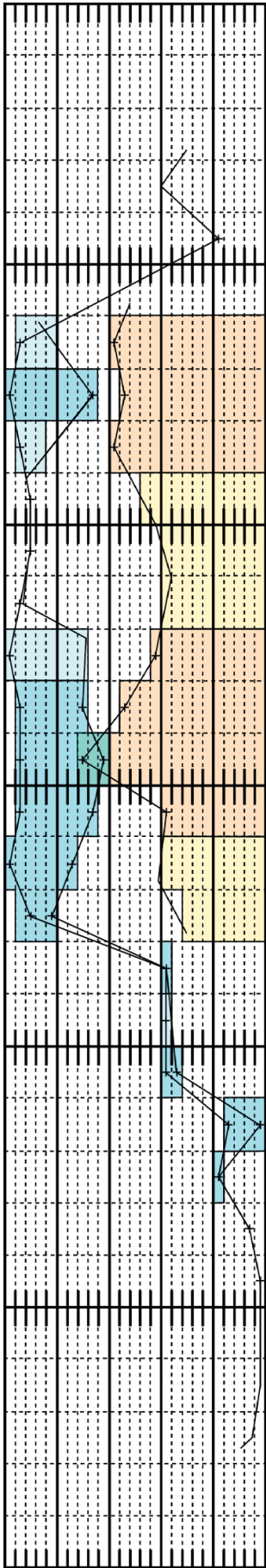
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 11



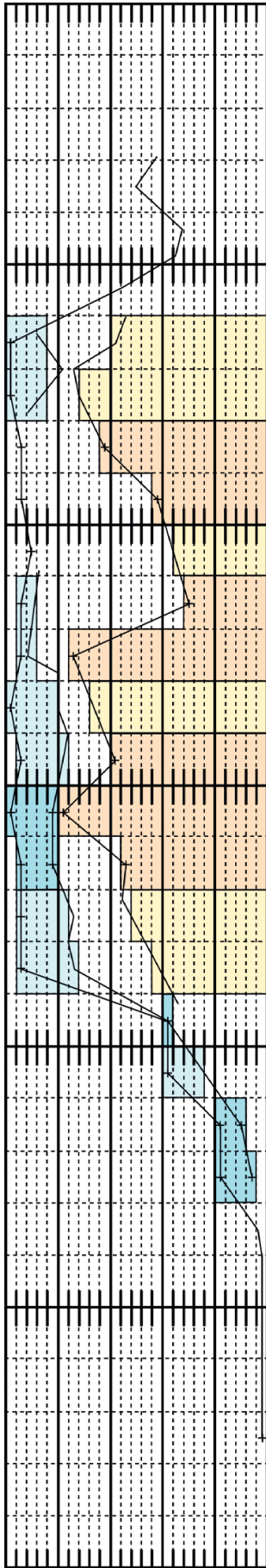
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 12



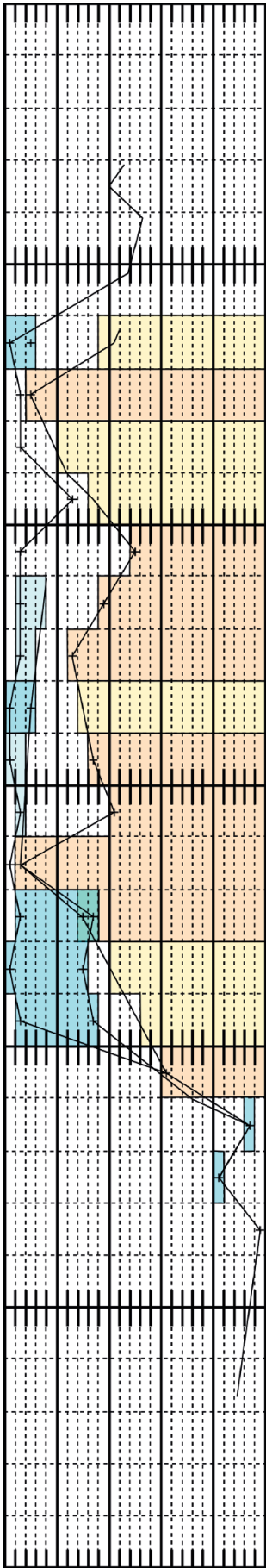
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 13



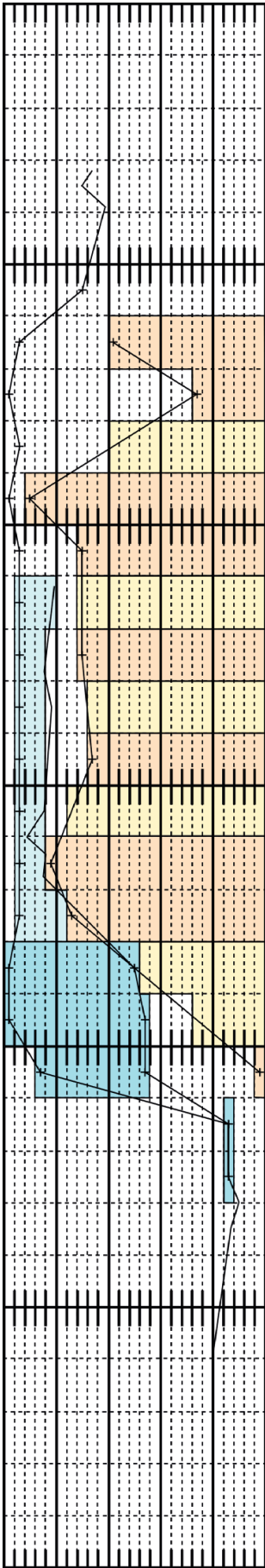
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 14



Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 15

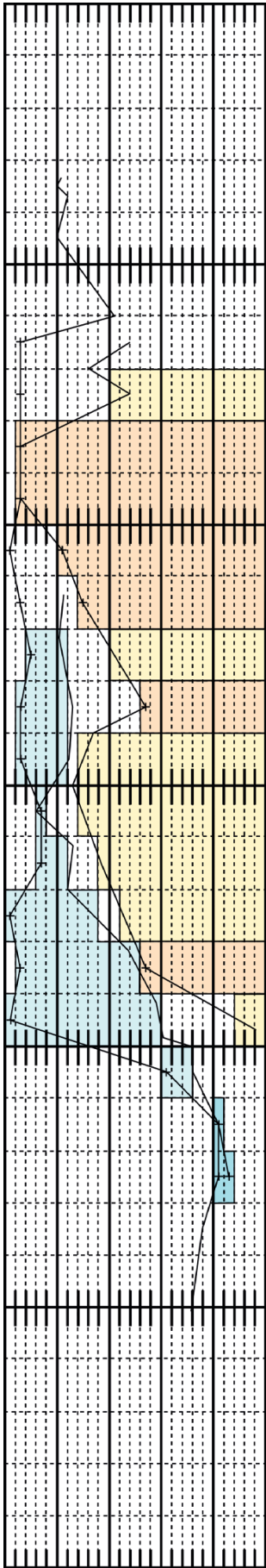


Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 16

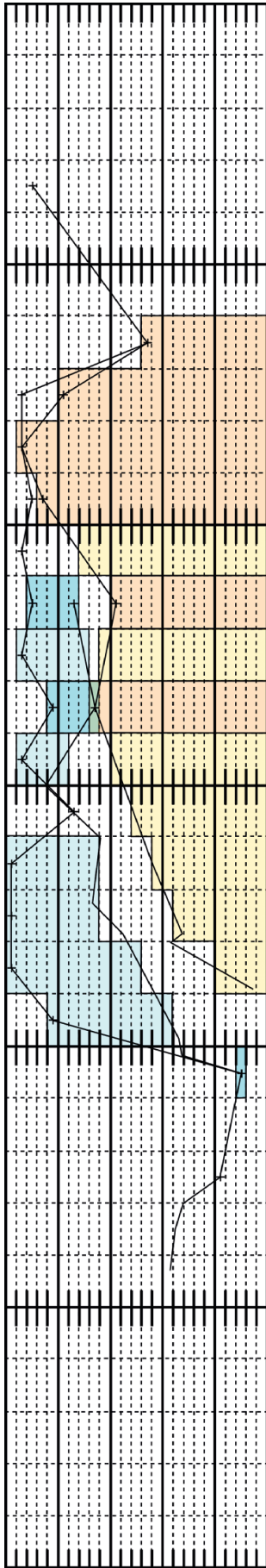




Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 17

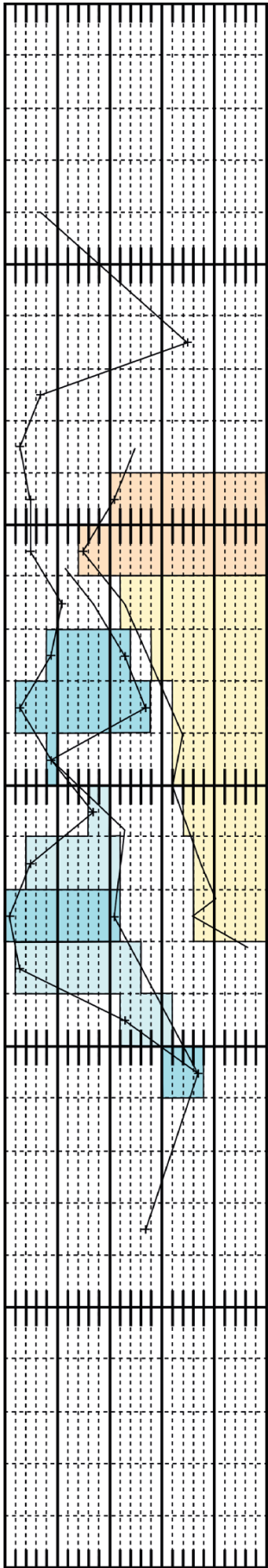


Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 18

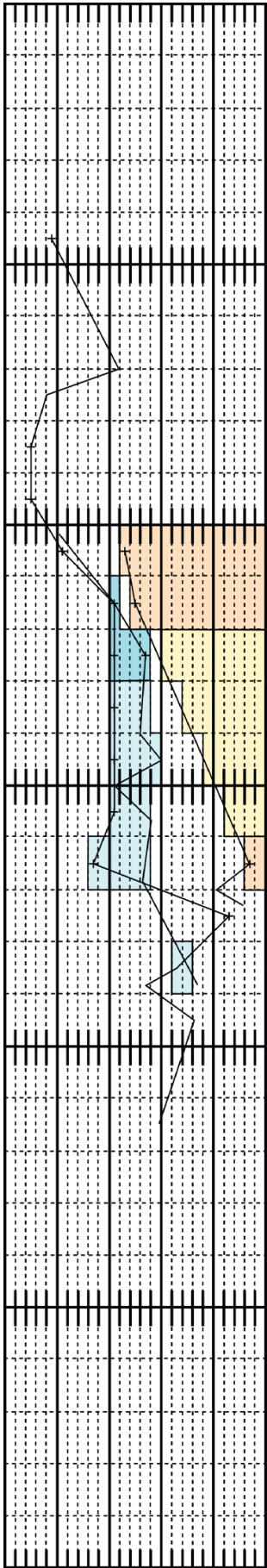




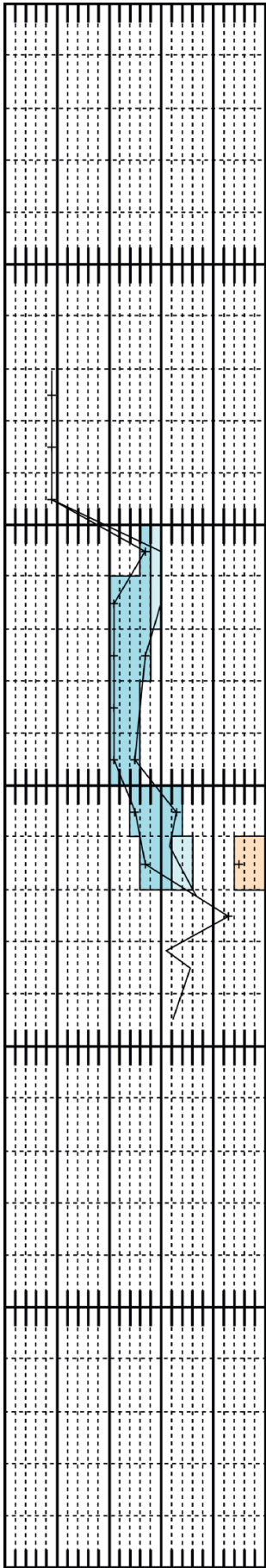
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 19



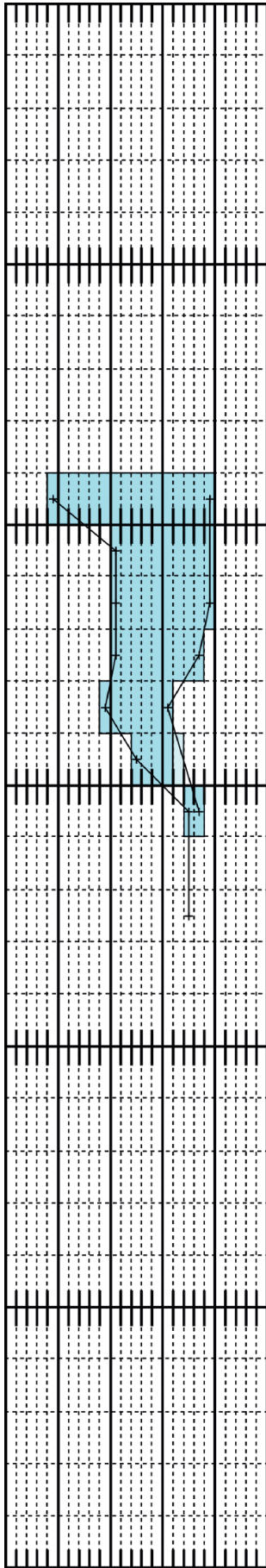
Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 20



Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 21



Approximate stratigraphic section along the x axis 22



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